

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

The Post Amerikan (1972-2004)

The Post Amerikan Project

10-1991

Volume 20, Number 3

Post Amerikan

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POST AMERICAN



BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL

Volume 20

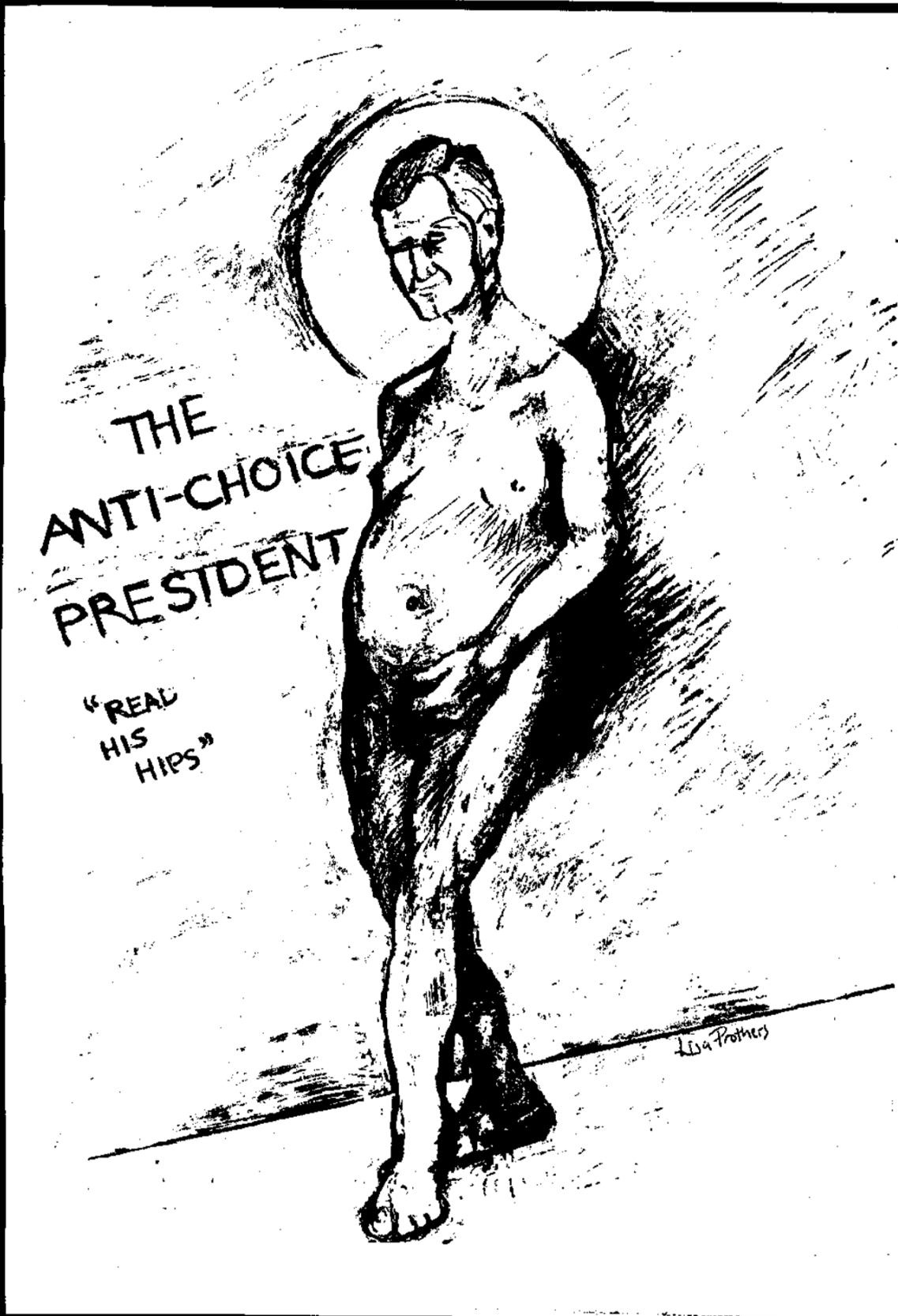
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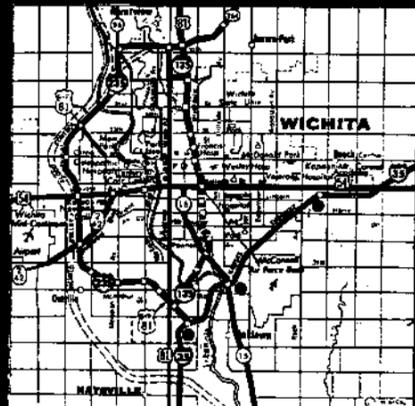
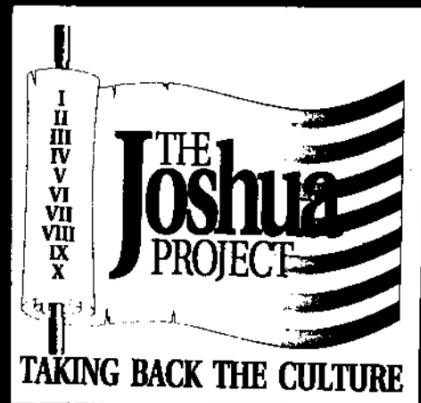
October/November 1991

THE CONTINUED ATTACK ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

SEE PAGE 8



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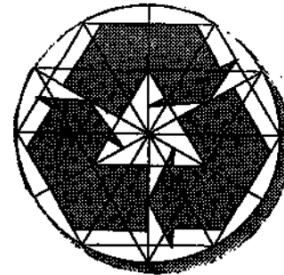
BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL

Volume 20 Number 3

October/November 1991

In this issue:

- Cover George Bush delivers
- 2 Page two stuff
- 3 Community news: ACT UP; Normal veggies; FAR lecture.
- 4-5 Railyard Requiem; Feminist Primer—Rats, Rats, everywhere Rats!
- 6-7 Bert reports that Amnesty International came out (sort of).
- 8-9 Our center spread: VFC blows the whistle on phony clinics, Operation Rescue, and other "prey."
- 10-11 Another reproductive right bites the dust; Letters—we get letters!
- 12-13 If you thought last year's "Hands Across Campus" was bad . . .
- 14-15 GALA news; schedule of events and coming out of the corn; Heartfelt thanks to Prof. Hill.
- 16-17 Lambda news.
- 18-19 P-Flag; Sifting through the ashes after Paris burned.
- 20 State of my University; Post Resource



About us

The *Post Amerikan* is an independent community newspaper providing information and analysis that is screened out of or down played by establishment news sources. We are a non-profit, worker-run collective that exists as an alternative to the corporate media.

We put out six issues a year. Staff members take turns as "coordinator." All writing, typing, editing, graphics, photography, pasteup, and distribution are done on a volunteer basis. You are invited to volunteer your talents.

Most of our material and inspiration for material comes from the community. The *Post Amerikan* welcomes stories, graphics, photos, letters, and new tips from our readers. If you'd like to join us, call 828-7232 and leave a message on our answering machine. We will get back to you as soon as we can. Don't worry if it takes a while—we don't meet every week.

An alternative newspaper depends directly on a community of concerned people for existence. We believe it is very important to keep a newspaper like this around. If you think so too, then please support us by telling your friends about the paper, donating money to the printing of the paper, and telling our advertisers you saw their ad in *Post Amerikan*.

What's your new address?

When you move, be sure to send us your new address so your subscription gets to you. Your *Post Amerikan* will not be forwarded (it's like junk mail—no kidding!). Fill out this handy form with your new address and return it to us, P. O. Box 3452, Bloomington, IL 61702.

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- Pantagraph, 301 W. Washington
- The Park Store, Wood and Allin
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- Red Fox, 918 W. Market
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- U. S. Post Office, 1511 E. Empire
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- Upper Cut, 409 N. Main
- Wash House; 609 N. Clinton

Normal

- Amtrak Station
- Avanti's, 407 S. Main
- Babbitts Book Store, North St.
- The Coffeeshouse, 114 E. Beaufort
- Hovey Hall, ISU (Front)
- Manchester Hall, ISU
- Mother Murphy's, 111 North
- North and Broadway
- White Hen, 207 Broadway
- Subway, 115 E. Beaufort
- Zorba's, Main St.

This issue of *Post Amerikan* is brought to you by . . .

Scott D. and John C. (Coordinators), Scott B., Deborah, John G., Pete, Lisa, John W., Sue, Christine, Vince, Bill, Bumper, Ralph, OUR FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS WHO SAVED US ONCE AGAIN, and the many others we probably forgot.

Good numbers

- ACLU 454-7223
- ACT UP/CI 827-4005
- AIDS Hotlines:
- National 1-800-AID-AIDS
- Illinois 1-800-243-2437
- Local (309) 827-AIDS
- Alcoholics Anonymous 828-5049
- Bloomington Housing Authority 829-3360
- Childbirth and Parenting Information Exchange (CAPIE) 827-6672
- Clare House (Catholic workers) 452-0310
- Community for Social Action 452-4035
- Connection House 829-5711
- Countering Domestic Violence 827-4005
- Dept. of Children/Family Services 828-0022
- Draft Counselling 452-5046
- Gay & Lesbian Resource Phonenumber 438-2429
- HELP (transportation for senior citizens, handicapped) 828-8301
- Ill. Dept. of Public Aid 827-4621
- Ill. Lawyer Referral 1-800-252-8916
- Kaleidoscope 828-7346
- McLean Co. Center for Human Services 827-5351
- McLean Co. Health Dept. 454-1161
- Mid Central Community Action 829-0691
- Mobile Meals 828-8301
- Narcotics Anonymous 827-3898
- National Health Care Services—abortion assistance 1-800-322-1622
- Nuclear Freeze Coalition 828-4195
- Occupational Development Center 452-7324
- Operation Recycle 829-0691
- Parents Anonymous 827-4005
- PATH: Personal Assistance Telephone Help 827-4005 or 800-322-5015
- Phone Friends 827-4008
- Planned Parenthood (medical) 827-4014 (bus/couns/educ) 827-4368
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- Unemployment comp/job service 827-6237
- United Farmworkers support 452-5046
- UPIC 827-4026

Deadline

The next deadline for submitting *Post* material is **Monday, November 19, 1991**

Material submitted after the deadline will probably not get printed in the next issue.



Community News

Normal vegetarians under attack

Vegetarians of Normal, beware! There is a move on to redefine the way we eat into a bizarre and dangerous lifestyle.

The first salvo was fired by the Beef Industry Council and Beef Board. You know, the ones who fired James Garner as their spokesperson after his emergency bypass surgery? They placed ads in national magazines under the heading "Where does beef fit into a Normal diet?"

According to the ad, Normalites "enjoy a variety of foods, including lean beef." Why do all those Normal dwellers love beef so much? Because "a well-balanced diet means well-adjusted adults." Although not called so directly, cruelty-free eating is called a "food craze" and an "outlandish diet." The Beef Board's conclusion as to where beef fits into a Normal diet? "On the right side of the plate next to the vegetables." Emphasis on the *right*, please.

Next to step up to the dinner plate was Jennifer S. Johnson and *The Daily Vidette*. Johnson was just incensed over newspaper ads being placed by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, which alluded to the serial killings of Jeffrey Dahmer and related them to the slaughter of animals.

Of particular interest to me was Johnson's assertion that she is a vegetarian. I happened to be at a luncheon with Johnson after her article was published, at which special care had been taken to provide vegetarian alternatives. I noticed Jennifer eating a chicken sandwich. I mentioned to her that I thought she was a vegetarian. She replied, "I am, but I eat chicken."

ATTENTION EVERYBODY! If you intentionally eat chicken, or fish, or shellfish, or lard, or Jell-O, or anything else made with slaughterhouse products, then you are NOT a vegetarian. Please stop calling yourself one and stop speaking as our representatives. Thank you.

The Vidette followed up Johnson's column with another editorial two days later. It was thinly disguised as another attack on PETA's ads, but was really a diatribe against vegetarians. We were referred to as "left-wing vegetarian nuts" who want to rule the world.

All right, who told?

The Vidette went on to defend the right of every good Amerikan to stuff him- or herself full of any kind of dead animal s/he feels like. That right was established, I believe, in the little-known case of *Hormel v. Sam-I-Am*.

And so, as the annual massacre known as Thanksgiving looms ever closer, vegetarians keep this in mind. You're not Normal and you never will be. Good for you.

--Herbie Vore

Lecture by Feminists for Animal Rights

Batya Bauman, the East Coast Director of Feminists for Animal Rights, will give a lecture at 7:30pm on November 20th at the University of Illinois campus. The lecture will be held in Latzer Hall of the University YMCA. Ms. Bauman's talk will be on the connections between the oppression of non-human animals and women in a patriarchal society. For more information call Carolyn at 829-2224.



ACT UP/CI holds AIDS actions

BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL--ACT UP/CI organized a letter writing campaign, networked with other local progressive groups, and held two local actions during "AIDS Action Week" October 10-15. The group planned the week during its retreat in September.

First on the agenda was to show support for Kankakee activists who are fighting the discriminatory practices of Riverside Medical Center. ACT UP/CI wrote letters to *The Daily Journal* and hospital administrators to protest the firing of a Healthcare worker who has HIV. ACT UP/CI plans to continue support of the Kankakee activist (see page 16 of this issue of *Post Amerikan*).

October 12-13, ACT UP sponsored a 24 hour reading of names of people who have died of AIDS. The demonstration, held from noon to noon at the Old Bloomington Courthouse, was designed to draw attention to the critical number of people who have died from AIDS related complications.

The group's opening statement, which was read at the beginning of every hour, articulated, "Over the next 24 hours the existence of an AIDS healthcare crisis will be made a reality for those who choose to ignore its presence. This reading of names is a powerful and significant demonstration that after more than 10 years into this healthcare crisis, the number of AIDS related deaths in the US is unnecessary and unacceptable. We hold accountable all those who continue to remain unconcerned about this issue for the deaths of each person whose name is read aloud over this 24 hour period."

On October 13 at 2:00 p.m., the group held a "funeral" in downtown Normal entitled, "Death in The Normal Family." The demonstration, visible to all in the downtown area, brought to the community's attention that AIDS cannot be ignored in Bloomington/Normal. Participants mourned the death of the mother figure in *The Normal Family* statue.

Many who attended and participated in the Action Week were contacted through Rush Alternative, an annual networking meeting of local progressive organizations. This year's Rush was hosted by Amnesty International.

--Skeet Floyd

More fun than a barrel of crackers

According to an anonymous friend in the community, construction is almost complete on a new Cracker Barrel and Old Country Store in Bloomington. The Cracker Barrel, a national chain, recently issued a policy stating that no gay, lesbian or bisexual people may work at their restaurants because they "do not exhibit normal heterosexual values." about a dozen people have been fired under the policy.

The chain has been the target of protests across the country. Cracker Barrel's national headquarters claims to have rescinded the policy, but to date none of the fired workers have been rehired.

Our very own Cracker Barrel will be located on Brock Drive, across the street from Comfort Inn and Speed-D-Mart. The same friend says they are due to open in the next 60 days.

Grieving earth festival

The Student Environmental Action Committee (SEAC) is hosting a Grieving Earth festival in support of protecting the Shawnee National Forest on Saturday, November 2, at 7:00 p.m., in People's Park, far south quad, corner of University and Beaufort. For more information call Elaine at 888-4613. Also, you can find out more about SEAC in *The Post Resource*.

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Railyard requiem

I. The Thing Itself

The trainyards rise across Seminary from an old, ragged expanse of weed and ruin, tracks consumed by age and dust. All the old buildings fade in mid-afternoon sunlight, tilting just a little more each year. Some seem sturdy, others look as if only the spiderwebs hold them together.

I used to walk out to this place perhaps once a month. I was alone sometimes. Other times, I took a friend. But the walk always had an air of reverence. We'd start the tracks at the viaduct that crosses Main. Those few miles went quickly, particularly in spring, when the heat baking from piled railroad ties made them sweat tar onto the track gravel. I saw only a few beasts on that path. At the most, maybe three, mostly small, wild things like raccoons. Once we found the skeleton of some dead thing along the way, just pure white, picked clean by flies and heat. We took the bones home, bleached them, and made jewelry from the vertebrae.

There's something strange about saying that. I feel that I should be repulsed, but I still wear the jewelry from time to time. Indeed, what's wrong with it? I feel as if I should be somehow ashamed, but I'm not. Nothing was shameful out there. When Dave and I first discovered that it went to the trainyards, we used to make fairly regular pilgrimages, not talking, only walking with slow, regular strides, feeling as if we'd just discovered the sum of all the roads on the earth, and were going to follow it to its end.

Which, in a sense, we did. The end was the yards.

We'd first see them as a mass of huddled buildings, up in the distance. The sun would haze over there, leaving them vague and fuzzily outlined. Our steps would slow further, until we passed under a massive viaduct and into the dirt and dissolution of the yards.

Dirt and dissolution. That's strange. I feel as if I'm betraying this territory when I talk about it in such terms. But that's what the trainyards meant. They meant the end of all our contrivances carried away on the wind.

All my journeys to the yards have melted into one huge cycle. My memories come not as full-length sweeps of time, but rather as quick, painfully clear images. When I think, I see the brass buttons of Anne's jacket limned in late-afternoon sun. I remember their clarity. I remember feeling that the whole earth spun in their borders.



Untitled, 1991, Brian M. Hammond, etching.

I remember Dave playing harmonica against a wall, the sun throwing his lean shadow up to the roof, head bent forward, music straining with the wind. Always the wind out there, blowing goldenrod and cocklebur, ditchweed and scrub grass back in a vast wave. Pulling my hair loose from its moorings, flushing my neck red.

I remember finding a cache of old pay stubs scattered recklessly in an old, white stone maze. Men and women were paid fifteen cents per day. It was 1914. I still have the stubs. So many years later, and the paper still hasn't yellowed.

I remember Bob, on the very outskirts of the place, standing atop an oil car, the wind drifting a dark halo of hair around his face, leaning down to photograph Dave and me.

II. How It Was

The hush, the constant hush of wind and soil and decay, spreads over this place. I am standing and watching it, looking at a distance through the wires that surround it now. At least one person has died here that we know of; probably more. It has been shut off the the public for good reason. But I cannot help this sadness, rising up at the thought of those old, ragged buildings so full of desolate, unforgivable beauty being bulldozed.

I am saddened at the thought of losing what the yards did for me. They gave me quiet, perspective, and a sense of the largeness of things. They showed me, through their distant, silent example, the endless cycle of death and rebirth.

Times used to be, I like to think, that people could go to temples dedicated to nothing but the silence at the core of the world. I guess places like that still exist—the Adirondacks come to mind—but few, that I know of, that were built with human hands. Even fewer, I think that became that way when left to their own devices. Sure, I've seen old, ruined buildings before, but nothing compares to what I've seen at the yards. Something happened there, something slow and essential. I can't put my finger on that something, but it drew artists.

The photographer who died out there is the one who I am thinking of now, but I know personally many others who went there and drew what they needed from that place. Perhaps what they took was essence. Perhaps they learned about the rise and fall of the physical world, the strength of age, the endowment of sudden beauty where one least expects it. An angle of sunlight, the texture of stone. Weeds sprouting between concrete slabs. The frightening cool dark of an abandoned warehouse. Stairs that lead to nowhere, holes gaping in floors whose bottoms can be sounded by no stone. Wonder upon wonder. It's hard to tell.

At the risk of hobbling what I need to say with more words than are absolutely necessary, I'll say more. The first time I was out there, I was overcome with memory. Something tugged at the back of my mind, and echo of what I had once experienced.

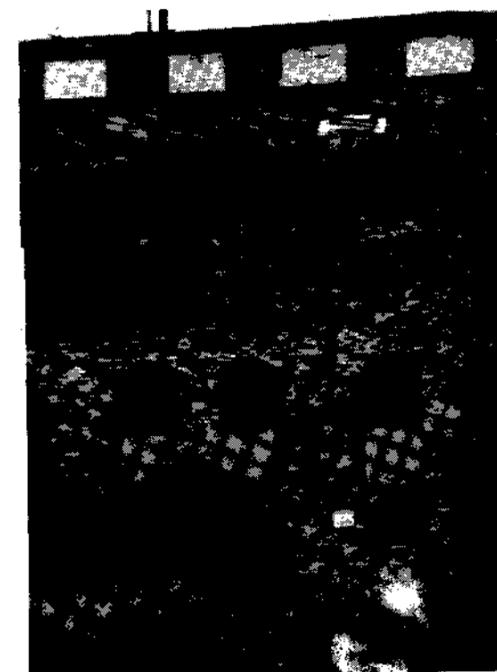
Then it hit me. I had felt this way before. One time, after meditating for about two hours, five minute breaks every half hour, I opened my eyes, and everything was so clear. It was as if I had rubbed the dirt off the lenses of my eyes, and let everything blaze forth in a lucidity that I had never before known. I knew that feeling again, at the trainyards.

Every time I turned around, there was a stone, so pure in its own stone-ness, so perfect unto itself that I didn't have to act on it. So, with no pegs on which to hang my sense of self, I was able to just sort of evaporate. I was able to stand there and look at all of it and be nothing. Which is to say that I was able to be everything. Nothing was closed to me, everything was coexistent with me. I was connected, purely and simply.

Which is why I am sad. All the people mentioned in this article as fellow pilgrims remember the same sensations. They remember not being alien, not being closed off, not being prisoners of themselves. They remember the intimacy with the world that I knew.

It had to be a function of the yards. Being there showed people what was truly essential. It was a place where the veils were finally lifted. It will be missed.

-J. Guzzo



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Feminist primer

X is for... Madame X

No, not that perennial tearjerker, which in one version starred Lana Turner, but that homeless woman who died after being hit by a train running through Bloomington-Normal. She's whom I mean by "Madame X."

A few weeks ago, a friend asked me if anyone on the *Post* was going to write about her, and I had to confess to her then as I do to my readers now that it was the first I had heard of it. (You see the Doctor doesn't read *The Pantagraph* on a regular basis—just the *Chicago Tribune* and *Post Amerikan*).

From what I can gather, Madame X, whose real name I've yet to learn, was walking along the tracks, collecting cans for cash. Apparently the engineer didn't see her in time or she overestimated the time she had to get out of the train's path.

Rumors abound about her death. I even heard that there was some official speculation that her death was a suicide, though that one strikes me as improbable, even insulting. I heard that her male companion thought she wasn't given proper emergency care at the hospital. I heard that he hung around long enough to identify her body and then split.

As I say, all that's rumor. I could verify more I suppose by looking through *The Pantagraph* for the first two weeks of August, but that strikes me as beside the point. While I may learn her name, her age and so on, none of that would tell me about who she really was.

I'd seen her in town, sometimes eating at Avanti's with her male companion, sometimes making a call at a pay phone in Bloomington. I'd seen her walking through town, carrying what I would assume were her sole worldly possessions in a couple of bags, wrapped in her quilted coat, even in the blistering July heat.

I'd marvel at her being able to wear that coat when I was sweltering in a t-shirt and shorts. I'd marvel at her dignified bearing and athletic stride when I was feeling beaten down by far less difficult life-circumstances.

If she and I happened to be in the same restaurant, I'd sometimes look at her from the corner of my eye. It struck me that we were about the same height and weight. I'd try to guess her age. She was at most ten or fifteen years older than me.

I'd wonder whether her life on the streets was a matter of choice, as it occasionally is with street people. Or was a matter of circumstance and hard luck, as is far more commonly the case? I'd find myself thinking "If she hasn't chosen this life, then I can't say I'm glad it's her and not me, but I'm sure glad it's not me."

Speaking as someone who came pretty damn close to being homeless some years ago, I appreciate perhaps more than many middle-class people how precarious day-to-day survival is, how easy it would be to become homeless. Wouldn't take much for most of us—lose a job, use up your savings while you look for another. Then one day there you are, sleeping in an alley, fighting off the lower forms of life on the food chain for the scraps in the bins behind Kroger's.

The Germans talk about *doppelgangers*: literally "double-walkers," someone who can take your place, sometimes for good, sometimes for ill, but always as somebody who walks in your place.

In a way I can't fully articulate, I felt and still feel that Madame X assumed my burden, that she walked for me, that somehow she lived out there on those mean streets and slept under bridges so I wouldn't have to do it myself.

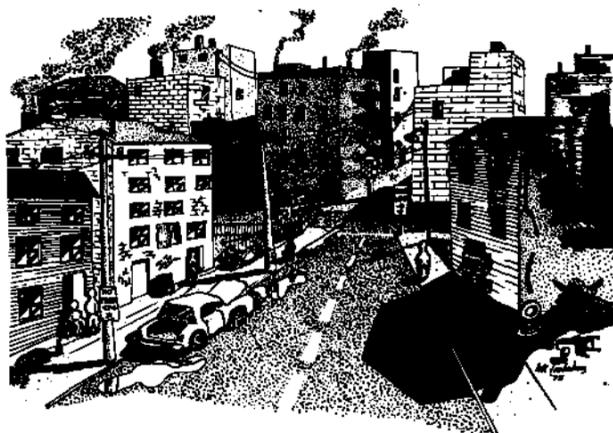
A few years ago, a local man suggested setting up a campaign to encourage people to donate shoes for the homeless, which then could be distributed through local shelters and social service agencies. After all, he reasoned, homeless people's major mode of transportation must be their feet, so it stands to reason that they could always use a new pair of shoes.

I thought of looking into it, thought of buying a pair of size 10 walking sneakers for donation purposes, thought of donating them for some woman who also happened to wear size 10 shoes. But that homeless woman was for me then an abstraction, a question mark, and I never got around to it.

If that man launches another "Shoes for The Homeless" campaign again, you can bet that I'll get around to donating a pair of size 10 sneakers, because now I can never again think of the homeless quite so abstractly. Every once in a while, I'll hear a train whistle or see cans by the track and unbidden thoughts of Madame X come to mind.

So this is for you, Madame X, and I know it's not much. In fact, if you were still with us you might find this essay silly, sentimental, even offensive. You might even say as a gesture it's as appropriate and useful as laying a pair of women's sneakers, size ten, on a grave.

--Dr. Attitude



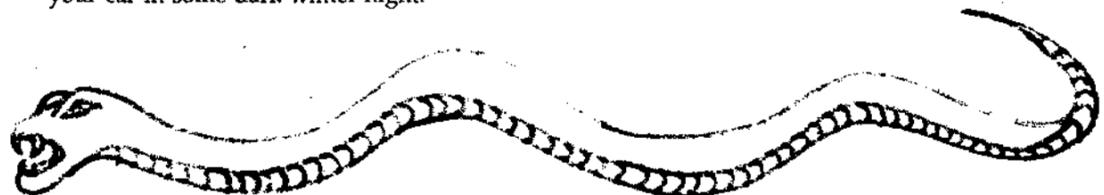
Snakes, rats and possums—oh my!

About a month ago, we got a call at the *Post Amerikan* from a woman residing in the general area of the old Bloomington train yards. She complained that as the train yards were beginning to be demolished, vermin—snakes, rats, "possums big as my neighbor's dog"—were infesting the neighborhood. Furthermore, it was clear that the city wasn't doing anything about it.

Now if that's true, residents in that area could be faced with a real problem. Those critters can spread diseases, such as rabies and bubonic plague, bite your children, eat your pets, dump your garbage, and if they take over your garage, scare the living hell out of you when you pull your car in some dark winter night.

So we sent Dr. Attitude and Vinnie-the-Muckraker off to canvas the neighborhood and see if they could get a story from the residents. But the Doctor and Vinnie didn't have much luck that Thursday afternoon—probably because too many people are at work then.

They'd like to pursue the story, if there is one, but they need your help. If you think that the anonymous caller's complaints deserve further, and you would be willing to be interviewed for a story, please contact the *Post* at 828-7232. Leave a number where we can contact you. If you're willing to be interviewed but wish to remain anonymous, we will protect your identity.



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El Salvador: 101

This summer I was a member of a CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador) student delegation to El Salvador. Our delegation met with several different sectors of the popular movement, participated in marches and events, and experienced the Salvadoran political and social reality.

Why should North Americans struggle for freedom in El Salvador?

El Salvador is a successful revolution in progress; a living example of the strength and power of a popular struggle building a new society. Feminists, laborers, students, youth, mothers and children, marginalized communities, artists, refugees, and cooperativists are organized to challenge the traditional imbalance of power and to struggle for peace and justice.

U.S. aid funds 50% of the Salvadoran military budget. Without this \$42.5 million a year, the military could not perpetuate its brutal repression of the Salvadoran people or continue fighting the war. The self-proclaimed "death squads" of El Salvador, operating under the ARENA party and military impunity, are also funded by these dollars.

As people of the United States, we have a responsibility to oppose our government's intervention threatening the lives of Salvadorans. As progressives--we can aid in the self-determination of a nation by supporting the roots of a new democratic society.

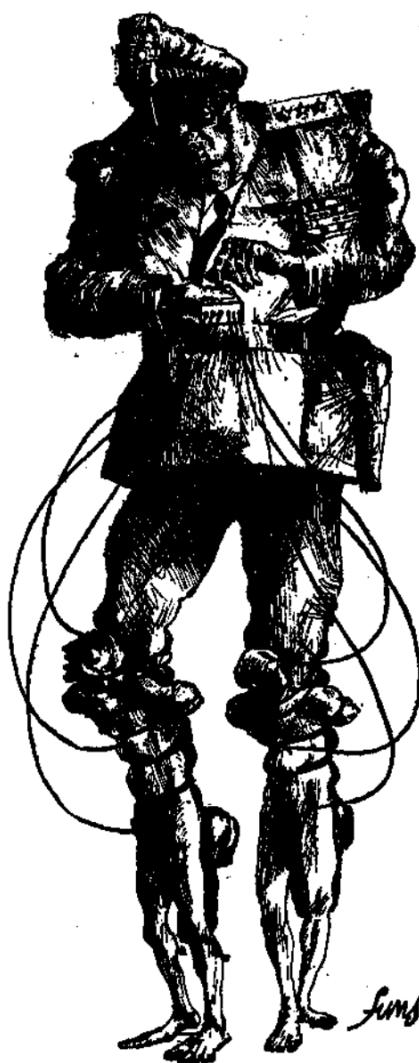
Current negotiations between the Salvadoran government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) are making real changes in the national realities of El Salvador. After the 1989 offensive launched by the FMLN, a military stand-off forced the Salvadoran government to the negotiating table. Here, the process of the last eighteen months has been the predominating force to challenge the unequal balance of power favoring the wealthy two percent of the population and the military. Ending military aid and supporting the U.N.-mediated solution to the civil war is the reasonable role for the U.S. government.

What about women in the Salvadoran struggle for democracy?

Women face the same repression from the Salvadoran government and military that men do and more. Sexual violence is very much part of the overall scheme of terror imposed by the military. After any military conflict, fifteen to twenty-five women will have been sexually assaulted. Women in the popular movement suffer rape as a form of torture when captured as political prisoners. Little is guaranteed to women in the judicial process to find justice for the crime.

Illiteracy among women is about 73%. One percent of Salvadoran women get a university level education. Health care for women, including maternal care, is highly inadequate. Domestic violence is a reality of male domination and is only intensified by the increased stresses of war and powerlessness. Eighty percent of Salvadoran households are headed by women. And in alignment with patriarchal values, women do all the family care in addition to having the main economic burden.

"With this, we believe woman justly demands a reconstruction of society, and she will be part of it," according to a Salvadoran women's movement organizer. Women are organized in labor unions and federations, health-care projects, and cooperatives. COMADRES, The Mothers of The Disappeared, was the first organization to take to the streets in a resurgence after the brutal repression of the early 1980's.



Women who organize within the popular movement take on a third realm of work. Many women get up at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning to take care of housework and family care in order to make it to early-morning organizing meetings before the start of the regular working day.

Within the FMLN, women make up 42% of the ranks. Equality of women and men is taught in the FMLN training, and women are substantial in leadership.

Upon returning to Bloomington/Normal, what do you bring back as an activist?

I've returned with knowledge of the importance of our work. International solidarity has freed over two hundred political prisoners in the past few years and serves to pressure an end to the repressive policies of the military and government. I've seen projects that money raised in the U.S. by progressive communities like ours have supported. Medical facilities in

San Salvador are saving the lives of people displaced by or injured by the war. Radio Farabundo Marti communicates the "Voice of the Revolution" throughout El Salvador and parts of Central America, reporting what is not seen or heard in the government-repressed and military-run press. A women's center and medical clinic serves as a base for organizing in eighteen communities in El Salvador and serves 5000 women--empowering them against sexual assault and domestic violence. Labor federations that have been severely repressed by government forces are rebuilding, standing up to the national legislature and refusing to accept continuing policies of repression.

What can I DO to further the struggle in El Salvador?

• Write or make phone calls to the U.S. Congress--tell your reps to end all military aid to El Salvador by supporting the McDermitt/Adams bill!!! This bill would end all military aid to El Salvador, including all pipeline aid (money already allocated but unspent), and makes provisions for future humanitarian aid to El Salvador to be distributed only through international organizations. McDermitt/Adams is going strong in the House, but further pressure is needed on the Senate. Dixon is being targeted for his lack of action for this bill. Simon was one of the first sponsors of the bill.

• Raise money for the Salvadoran popular movement. Money sent to El Salvador through the Bravo Fund supports hospital and health-care projects. The NEST (New El Salvador Today) Foundation helps grant a range of projects of the popular movement from-- women's health care and leadership training projects to agricultural cooperatives. Tax-deductible checks can be sent to the CISPES Education Fund/Freedom Fund, c/o Midwest CISPES, 3411 W. Diversey-Room 8, Chicago, IL 60647.

• Be part of a CISPES Freedom Brigade to El Salvador. Delegations such as these provide information and experience invaluable to North American activists. For Salvadorans, delegations provide an international witness to the repression they face. Contact Midwest CISPES for more info.

I'd like to thank members of the Bloomington/Normal and ISU community for lending their support to making my participation in this delegation possible. I was able to bring \$500 in material aid to organizations in El Salvador as well as medical and office supplies, clothing and basic goods needed. This money went to FEASIES, a labor federation in San Salvador, and to a reconstructed community in the San Vicente providence.

International solidarity is an essential component to victory of the popular struggle in El Salvador today. It meant a good deal to the many people my delegation met with to see people from so many parts of the U.S. engaged in the struggle to end U.S. intervention in El Salvador and Central America.

!Que viva la Lucha!

--gina olson



Bert Report II: Altering Amnesty International's agenda—appraisals and appeals



Most of you probably know that Amnesty International (AI) is a worldwide human rights organization that works on behalf of prisoners of conscience (men, women, and children imprisoned for their beliefs, color, sex, ethnic origin, language, or religion who have not advocated or used violence). Prisoners of conscience are everywhere and everyone. (Sort of)

Take Kim Songman,* for instance. He's a prisoner of conscience local Amnesty groups have been concentrating on lately. Kim Songman received a life sentence for advocating Korean reunification—a typical AI prisoner of conscience.

But what if Kim Songman had been imprisoned for engaging in gay sex? What if he were a woman being denied property rights or inheritance rights? These are the kinds of questions lobbyists have been asking AI for almost two decades now.

You may recall in the last issue of the *Post* I reported that AI's Mandate Review Committee (MRC) was meeting in Tokyo in September to discuss the possibility of including on their mandate sexual orientation and the act of gay sex as human rights. Well, the conference came and went. The outcome: Amnesty decided to "adopt" lesbians and gay men.

Three big "Cheers!" to Amnesty International (with a soft "Finally!" on the side).

On the surface, anyway.

Although the MRC approved the proposed addition to the mandate, there seems to be an overall reluctance to its being actively put into use.

Says Sean Stiles, chief press secretary for the International Secretariat (AI's central governing body), "We've got to work out policy guidelines. It could conceivably be done by Christmas, but we really are going to take this one slow and easy."

Why the delay?

Several Amnesty heads place the blame on chapters in developing countries. They're afraid these groups won't react well to the new gay policy. The final resolution to the mandate even included a rider which reads "[the MCR] realizes fully that this decision increases the difficulty of the development of our movement in many parts of the world."

Others maintain that the Western AI members have blamed developing countries in an attempt to hide their own homophobia. A 1990 internal memo from the Secretariat's London-based offices revealed homophobic graffiti appeared repeatedly in the restrooms. Additionally in 1990, a secret meeting was arranged by lesbian and gay workers from the offices to discuss homophobia within the offices, and just this past summer there was resistance from the office to a Queer Planet demonstration that occurred just days before this year's AI council convened.

So, what's going to happen? Gay rights activists and AI officials alike feel it's going to be awhile before the gay campaign really gets underway.

"It's going to a very long time before that pattern of how they define prisoners of conscience is going to expand to include people who are sitting in jail because they got caught having sex in a public park," says Samuel Helfrich, a former member of Amnesty International who resigned to protest the organization's failure to work on behalf of lesbians and gay men. Other activists contend that AI does not have the methods to start finding gay and lesbian prisoners, and thus it will be left to gay rights groups to inform AI of the gay prisoners. Even then, AI will only consider the proposals from the other groups and decide later if it is to adopt the prisoners.

We can only wait to see how AI reacts to future lesbian and gay cases.

Meanwhile, AI recently established a Women's Campaign to upgrade its efforts in regard to women's rights. While in general lobbyists applaud AI for the campaign, some criticize AI's mandate because it only allows AI groups to concentrate on women prisoners as opposed to women in general.

According to Felice Gaer, executive director of the International League for Human Rights, "Amnesty's great strength is also where its weakness is, regarding women. Their women's task force is trying as hard as they can within the confines of the traditional civil-political rights perspective, which is very important. But their mandate prevents them from getting into issues like inheritance laws, property rights, or legal infantilization of women, which leads to other kinds of abuse."

The question here is, what is AI's function? Should an esteemed and powerful group such as AI work on behalf of all women's rights, or should it stick to its original intent—that is, to work of behalf of prisoners?

If Amnesty does expand its statute to concern all women, it could be setting an exhausting precedent for itself. In covering all these new issues and to remain impartial (which is a highly important part of the group's standards), AI will have to act not only on behalf of all women, but on behalf of *all* people.

Essentially, such a change would render AI liable for virtually *any* issue that arises.

The main problem here is that AI could hardly handle such a huge responsibility. Obviously, it is not the only human rights group in existence. Its policy of working of behalf of political prisoners gives the organization a system on which to base its work and keeps the need of AI from becoming overwhelming.

(sources: *Ms.* July/August 1991 and *Advocate* October 1991)

Save the pigeons.

—Bert

*Kim Songman, a graduate in Physics from Yonsei University, was convicted in January 1986 of anti-state activities for writing pamphlets critical of the South Korean government and for meeting with North Korean officials while visiting Hungary and East Berlin while a student and discussing with them the student movement in South Korea and the possibilities

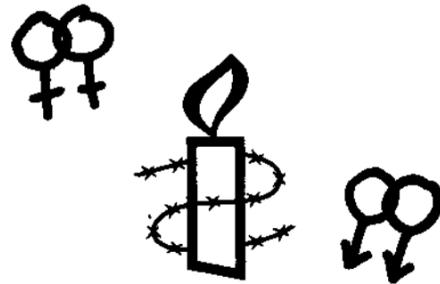
of Korean Reunification. He is currently serving a life sentence at Taejon Prison (prisoner number 3608) for the aforementioned actions.

Amnesty International has thoroughly investigated his case and found no evidence that he carried out espionage activities or that he used or advocated violence to effect political change. Kim Songman's continued imprisonment is therefore in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Please write to the following officials and demand Kim Songman's unconditional release:

His Excellency President ROH Tae-woo
The Blue House
1 Sejong-no
Chongno-gu
SEOUL
Republic of Korea

Consul General
Republic of Korea
3500 Clay Street
San Francisco, CA 94118

Ambassador Tong-Jin Park
2370 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008



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THE CONTINUED ATTACK Voice for Choice News

On September 14th, 1991, Dr. Aleksander Jakubowski's women's health clinic was broken into and vandalized. The clinic is located in Aurora, Illinois. The vandals did \$175,000 dollars damage to medical equipment, the office walls, and client records. The clinic was apparently targeted because abortions are performed there. Jakubowski said that "this is part of my gynecological and obstetric practice and is going to be part of it."

Anti-choice protesters have regularly picketed Jakubowski's office since he moved his practice from rented office space in a local hospital. The regular protesters have distanced themselves from the vandalism.

Neighborhood support for Jakubowski and the clinic was overwhelming. Those interviewed identified the protesters as the problem, not the clinic. The mayor of Aurora, David Pierce, appeared to be the only voice of ignorance as he stated, "We don't need vandalism in this town along with any other crime, and we probably don't need what he does here either." Then we wouldn't have controversies here. We don't need that.

Jakubowski also operates a clinic in Milwaukee. However, he will be closing that facility as the landlord has refused to renew the lease for fear of similar attacks. Jakubowski has been unable to find other landlords willing to rent to him.

Earlier this summer Jakubowski was the target of an attack while he was on his way to the Milwaukee clinic. As Jakubowski stopped at a roadside oasis to some breakfast protesters who had been following him chained themselves to the axle of his car. Police were called and had to cut the protesters free. Three days after the Aurora vandalism, Jakubowski's car was vandalized again on his way to Milwaukee.

Source: *Elgin Courier News*

On July 21, the Santa Maria chapter of Planned Parenthood of Santa Barbara was set on fire. The fire caused \$10,000 dollars damage and according to fire investigators was the result of arson.

In a move that horrified the nation, protesters outside the Women's Advisory Center in Livonia, Michigan, on June 8 carried placards that gave the names of two patients who had visited the clinic the previous week. A spokesperson for the protesters said that the group had used the tactic because police barricades outside the clinic had prevented them from counseling the patients. No one knows how the protesters got the patients' names.

Joseph Schiedler, former director of the National Right to Life Committee, has stated on previous occasions that his group used private investigators to track clients. The group has also been known to track patients through their auto license plates.

Source: *New York Newsday*

Operation Rescue has vowed to return to Chicago in November. We will be contacting the Emergency Clinic League in Chicago to try to assist them should events similar to Wichita occur. If you are interested in assisting, please call us at 828-3108.

What can we say about Wichita? Only this: a poll of Wichita residents conducted August 11 found that Operation Rescue's activities had turned off more people than they had converted. Many citizens said they were fed up with "out-of-towners" invading their streets.

The poll showed that 77.3% of Wichitans had not changed their minds one way or the other on abortion because of Operation Rescue. 78% disapproved of Operation Rescue tactics. And nearly 70% indicated that they were pro-choice.

Furthermore, on August 9, about 35 Wichita religious leaders, representing two Jewish organizations and several main stream protestant denominations, formed a group called "Religious Leaders for Choice."

Source: *Insider*

On September 12, the US Senate overwhelmingly passed the \$204 billion Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Bill, HR 2702, which provides \$162 million for Title X—a \$21 million increase over the fiscal year 1991 allocation. In addition, the Senate retained the language included in the House bill prohibiting the administration from implementing the Title X gag rule for fiscal year 1992. The vote on final passage was 78-22.

The House and Senate have each passed versions of Appropriations Bills for the Department of Health and Human Services and both bills contain language which would reverse the gag rule. The Department of Health and Human Services is the agent of the US Government that administers the Title X money. The House and Senate versions of this bill will now go to conference committee which is expected to convene the first week in October. If the report from the conference committee is accepted by both the House and Senate, the bill will go to the President to sign.

Please call your representatives and tell them you oppose the gag rule on Title X funding and you want them to vote to accept the conference report on this issue. Also, let them know that you want them to vote to override the promised presidential veto of the bill.

Senator Paul Simon
462 Dirkson Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-2152

Senator Alan Dixon
331 The Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-2854



Representative Tom Ewing
1632 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-2371

Source: *The Insider*

The AFL-CIO executive council announced on July 31 that it supports legislation to overturn the gag rule. On August 13, the American Bar Association passed a resolution supporting legislation "which ensures the right of patients of federally funded family planning clinics to receive full counseling and referrals on all medical options relating to pregnancy and the right of health care professionals in such facilities to advise their patients in accordance with their best medical judgement and professional ethics."

Source: *The Insider*

VFC investigates local agencies

BLOOMINGTON--McLean County Voice for Choice recently held a press conference to release their findings from an investigation into pregnancy counseling services offered in Bloomington/Normal.

On Sunday, October 6, 1991, outside of the Crisis Pregnancy Center, VFC revealed to the local press the outcome of their investigation. VFC said that they were motivated by their concern for women's health and their fear that women are being lured into clinics which have hidden agendas.

The local pro-choice organization obtained their information through telephone calls to each of the agencies, conversations with women who have utilized agency services and the findings of their own investigator.



Fake clinics nationwide

Last month, Representative Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) held hearings in the House Small Business Committee on the false advertising and abusive tactics of fake abortion clinics. Mark Salo, Executive Director of Planned Parenthood of San Diego and Riverside Counties, reported on an investigation his affiliate did after numerous patients complained of experiences with these fake clinics in California.

Some of the more extreme actions of these clinics included counselors calling a woman's husband and police, reporting her to be suicidal. The counselor also called the Child Protective Services, calling her a threat to her child. Other women reported that these clinics counselors had made calls to their homes and schools informing them of the woman's visit.

The Committee is looking at ways to force these clinics to advertise their non-abortion philosophy so women seeking objective counseling can avoid being lured into their web.

In Illinois alone, there are an estimated fifty to one hundred such fake clinics. Such clinics are really anti-choice centers. These centers often operate under the name of "crisis" or "problem pregnancy centers." Their goal is to oppose abortion in all forms. The centers use one to one counseling and the use of audio visual aids to inflict fear, anxiety, and guilt.

These fake clinics target young women and women in poverty with the promise of a free pregnancy test and counseling. The test is administered and the woman is ushered into a room where she is shown an anti-choice film and literature which misrepresents established medical facts about sexual activity, contraception, and abortion. The facilities are rarely staffed with professional counselors or medical staff.

A look at three agencies

The Voice for Choice investigation focused on three Bloomington/Normal agencies that advertise pregnancy counseling: Planned Parenthood, Birthright, and Crisis Pregnancy Center. At the press conference, VFC briefly outlined their findings:

1. Both the Crisis Pregnancy Center and Birthright are staffed by volunteers who typically have no formalized training in either counseling or medicine. Those volunteers from Crisis Pregnancy Center are not degreed, but instead trained by its parent company, Living Alternatives, Inc. Planned Parenthood provided licensed medical professionals, and counselors and educators have college degrees in their related fields.

2. Both Crisis Pregnancy Center and Birthright oppose abortion and will not make referrals for abortion. The goal of counseling in these centers is to persuade the woman to carry the pregnancy to term regardless of her life situation. Also, both organizations provide misinformation about abortion; neither provide contraceptive services. Planned Parenthood provides abortion information and has a counseling goal to help women make an informed decision regarding pregnancy. Planned Parenthood offers complete and accurate information about contraceptives and abortion.

3. The Crisis Pregnancy Center uses scare tactics, mostly graphic films depicting abortion. It also, as a counseling component, emphasizes religion—Christianity, to be specific. Clients are not informed about this religious focus prior to any appointment.

4. The Crisis Pregnancy Center requires a great deal of information about its clients not necessarily related to pregnancy: home and work numbers, addresses, church attending. Services are not necessarily confidential (the counselor called the VFC undercover investigator and left a message on the VFC monitored answering machine). Birthright and Planned Parenthood both provide a guarantee of confidentiality.

In the meantime . . .

In their closing comments, Voice for Choice offered area women advice for protecting themselves from fake or bogus clinics. First, VFC suggests that women select clinics that have clearly established reputations. Also, women should seek clinics that provide a full range of contraceptive alternatives. Clinic staff members should provide straightforward, clear answers and information regarding their services without hesitation. And finally, women should select clinics that have or are supervised by licensed health practitioners.

VFC is in the process of publishing their findings in detail to distribute to the local community. For more information, write: McLean County Voice for Choice, PO Box 905, Bloomington, IL 61702.

—S. Lloyd DeWitt
with a great deal of help from the VFC press packet.

Let's pray the Chain of Life

Although I am sure that Voice for Choice will be submitting to the *Post* a complete rundown on their press conference exposing anti-choice "pregnancy counseling centers," I would like to make some of my own observations on and ask some questions about the press conference and the anti-choice Christian Action Council's "Life Chain" demonstration which took place on the same day.

Upon arriving at VFC's press conference, a man carrying an anti-choice sign and propaganda approached those gathered with an invitation to the "Life Chain" which would start at 4:00 that afternoon. When the press showed up he insisted on speaking with them and shoving literature in their faces. When Linda from VFC went to speak with the press he followed her closely in the most touching manner.

There was also an anti-choice lady brandishing a tape recorder and a gentleman in a red jacket with a camcorder. The lady seemed content to tape the remarks made by Linda, but Red Jacket insisted on getting as close as he could while videotaping Linda's speech and the faces of everyone there. I am not quite sure what his purpose was, but I understand that photographing pro-choicers and their cars is a common intimidation tactic used by anti-choicers. It didn't work.

Meanwhile, the anti-choicer and his sign did their best to be as visible as possible via pushing and shoving so as to get the sign in the picture at all times. I spent most of the conference with the sign handle digging into my back. Even when requested to get out of the picture by the reporter, the anti-choice zealot insisted, and the two exchanged heated words.

After the press conference, my husband, David, and I decided to take a swing by the anti-choice "Life Chain". The "Life Chain" is a national anti-choice event where anti-choicers line the streets holding signs that say "Abortion Kills Children" on one side and "Jesus Heals and Forgives" on the other.

Not in the mood for any sort of confrontation, we decided to just drive down College Avenue for a quick peek at the "Chain". About 350 people were there, but almost half were children and young teenagers, all of whom seemed to be with their parents. We only saw one woman who was obviously pregnant. There seemed to be a fairly even mix of men and women, and older and younger people. But what was particularly noticeable about the "Chain" was its color. White. I don't think I saw one person of color in the entire demonstration.

All the cars seemed to be parked at Epiphany Catholic Church (where else?). Interestingly enough, nearby Eastview Christian Church was packed for evening services. As Eastview is extremely conservative, I wonder why all of their people were not "taking a stand for life?" After leaving the site of the demonstration David and I went to a local store where we noticed a nun in habit shopping. Why wasn't she at the demonstration? In fact, why wasn't the rest of the alleged "Pro-Life majority" out in force for this grand, nationally celebrated occasion? The CAC has about 500 people on its mailing list; where were they? Why is it that the "Chain" had to get almost half of its participants through using the children of its adult members?

Perhaps most disturbing of all is that the anti-choicers found it necessary to disrupt the VFC press conference, and yet I did not see even one anti-choicer disrupting the "Life Chain". Does the CAC honestly feel that the anti-choice position is so weak that it is necessary to abandon all rules of fair play and common decency in defense of that position? Actually, questions such as these are purely rhetorical, just like the answers I'm sure you would get if you bothered to ask.

—Lainie

McLean County Voice for Choice presents . . .

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Saturday, November 9
7PM-12AM

All acts are welcome.

\$4 entry fee.

\$50.00 Grand Prize

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All proceeds benefit Voice for Choice

For more information about how to enter the Follies, write:

VFC, PO Box 905, Bloomington, IL 61702

This is a safe space.



Another reproductive right bites the dust

On Wednesday, September 18, I woke at 5 a.m. and began having contractions. 1 1/2 hours later I was holding a very healthy 9 lb. 4 oz. baby in my arms. The child was born gently, safely and peacefully at my home in Bloomington. This joyful birth had followed a healthy pregnancy that was monitored with the help of a skilled lay midwife as well as an obstetrician.

Lay midwives are midwives who have trained and apprenticed with other midwives rather than through a set course of schooling resulting in a state recognized certified nurse midwife status (CNM for short). My O.B. knew of my desire for a homebirth and was also aware that in the extremely rare incidence of a complication that could not be remedied at home, that we would transport to the hospital 5 minutes away.

Fortunately, this birth was quick, smooth and joyful. My husband, 3 1/2 year old daughter, 2 close women friends (who had also attended our first birth) and my sister were all at the house to share in the excitement. This birth left us feeling powerful, proud, and ready to face the even more awesome responsibilities of parenting that lay ahead.

Our joy was diminished 2 days later when we heard that Jim Edgar had signed House Bill 1857. This bill amended the Medical Practice Act of 1987 which had stated that non licensed people treating medical illnesses were subject to sentencing and fines for "practicing medicine without a license." Fortunately, pregnancy and birth were not viewed as being illnesses and therefore exempted the practice of lay midwifery.

How ironic that in 1988, Jim Edgar, then Secretary of State, signed a proclamation making July 25-31 Illinois Midwifery Week because, among other reasons, "midwives offer cost effective care to low-risk women and bring high-risk women into the medical health-care system when these women would otherwise not have secured a health care provider." With this new ruling, more women will be forced to forgo prenatal care or to travel across state lines to receive care. Others, who are uninsured or feel that hospital birth is not the right option for them, will go without care for the pregnancy and birth.

Midwifery offers financial benefits to a client as well. Most obstetricians in this area charge from \$1,300 - \$1,500 for their services, and a vaginal birth in a hospital runs about \$3,000. A "normal" uncomplicated pregnancy and birth will total about \$4,000. The lay midwives who were practicing in this area charged \$600 - \$1,000 for their services. Again this included hour long visits versus the 5 minutes that an o.b. sees a patient and fabulous care during labor.

Whereas most obstetricians arrive only in time to catch the baby and a labor nurse's shift might end right as a laboring mom is beginning to feel comfortable with her, midwives come to the home and are available for nonstop labor support. Backrubs, herbal baths, meals or snacks, verbal support, suggestions for more comfortable labor and delivering positions, etc. are all part of midwives' duties during labor.

Without the lay midwives who have been available to us, there are now limited options for alternative births in this area. There is one certified nurse midwife practicing in LaSalle Peru, but she limits her practice to hospital births only. This nurse midwife believes in women's ability to give birth and allows her clients to birth in a very calm, homelike manner. Her clients are allowed to return to their homes shortly after the birth rather than spending 2 or 3 days in the hospital.

The new version, introduced by the Illinois Medical Association, now replaces the word illness with 'condition' which does include pregnancy and birth. So, beginning January 1st of 1992, practicing lay midwives, because they are not recognized and licensed by the state of Illinois, will be sentenced and jailed if found guilty of assisting women as they give birth. I have spoken with all of the lay midwives practicing in this area of the state and regretfully, all are terminating their practices.

Another reproductive right has been taken away from women, and like the others, leaves us mourning for the loss. Lay midwifery gave us the opportunity to birth without unnecessary interventions, to share the birth with the people of your choice, and to control our own birth experiences. The State of Illinois has made a sad judgement in this ruling. Lay midwives have the potential to greatly improve birthing conditions in Illinois.

Midwives offer excellent care to low-risk pregnant women. The prenatal care, usually in visits of an hour or more, includes all of the basics that any obstetrician would perform (tests on blood, urine, weight, fundus height, blood pressure and monitoring the heart beat of the baby). Midwifery care also includes emotional healthcare, education of birthing options, diet counseling, and other services that assist to insure both the mother and the midwife that mom and baby are as healthy as possible. Midwives also screen out any clients who have any problems that would add risk to a homebirth situation.

Lay midwives have been offering health care to some women who would not otherwise receive prenatal attention. According to the 1991 Illinois

Auditor General Report, 46 Illinois counties have no obstetrician services and 39 counties have no hospital maternity facilities.

Many homebirth clients may be pleased with this option. Others will travel to larger cities for their prenatal care where doctors are responding to the desire for homebirths by adding this to their practices. These o.b.s have certified nurse midwives who go to the laboring woman's home and call the doctor if needed. Pregnant women from this area could choose to travel for their prenatal visits and then go to a hotel suite or a friend's home to birth. Other women will cross the state lines into Kentucky, Iowa, and Missouri where lay midwives are still allowed to practice.

No, homebirth with a lay midwife isn't for everyone. However, for healthy women, birth is not an illness. We deserve the right to birth in our own homes with our chosen healthcare providers. How dare the state try to interfere with such events.

--Holly Foy

[Writer's note: By the way, because my birth was so fast, our midwives did not arrive until one hour after the birth. (They live in Springfield!) Our prenatal care had included so much information that we felt no fear as we delivered our child ourselves. The few complications that could have arisen I knew how to handle and none of us even thought to go to the hospital. After all, my body was designed to do what it did. It was a powerful experience.]

Letters

More than *The Pantagraph* has to offer

Dear Post,

Sorry to read that you are in a tough financial spot. Here is a donation to help out.

Without fail, each small issue of the *Post* gives me more of interest to read in a mere 16-24 pages than a month's worth of *Pantagraphs*.

Now, I'm not really a lefty, and sometimes your articles really piss me off. But the rest of your stories really hit the target. This town needs a paper like this. It's just too bad more people don't read it or even know it's around.

Keep up the good work!

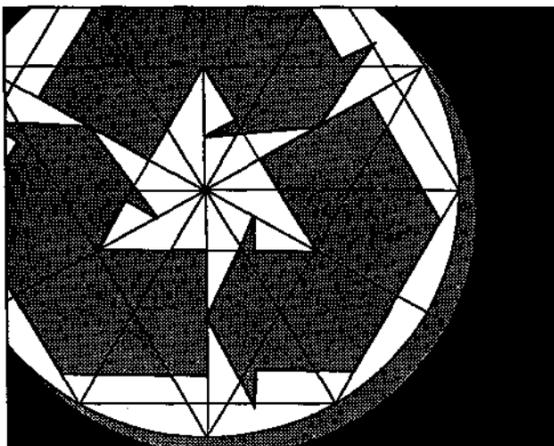
Mark Wright

With love and anarchy

Dear *Post Amerikan*,

After recovering from my illness in South Florida, I returned to Seattle to finish up incompletes at North Seattle Community College. As I am sure you could tell from my correspondence, I was more than a little stressed out. In order to clear up any confusion, I would like to state that I long ago gave up Leninism and am now a committed anarchist.

I have not worked with the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party since 1987. I then turned to anarchist-communism until a relapse in the illusion of the "need" for law and government resulted in my joining the Trotskyist International Socialist Organization during the fall and winter of 1990. It was then in the spring of 1990, that the change in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R. from state capitalism to private capitalism put me back on the anarchist path. I still stand by that opinion as stated in my written resignation from the I.S.O., which was published in the anarchist news monthly *Love and Rage*.



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Recently I stopped by Seattle's libertarian-socialist bookstore, Left Bank Books. I was both surprised and pleased to find the August/September issue of the *Post Amerikan* in the newspaper rack. I know at least two other left activists here who are from Bloomington-Normal. One person with whom I work on the United Front Against Facism used to write for the *Post Amerikan* when she attended Illinois State University. I will mention the paper's now available at our next meeting.

My apologies to Isis for the stress that myself and other members of my family invariable shared during my father's heart attack last May 1990. I look forward to visiting Bloomington again as soon as it is possible. Keep up the good work, I especially liked the article on the vote none of the above campaign.

With love and anarchy,
Richard S. Mote

P.S. Good government is no government!



A "sustainer" sustains

Dear Posters:

I read Scott's plea for help in your latest issue and am responding with this check. A long, long time ago I donated some money to the *Post* and got a "sustainer" subscription, which meant it appears receiving a copy of the *Post* until the end of time or the Democrats get back in the White House, whichever comes first. In any case, I thought it was time that I coughed up some more dough, so here it is.

I was thinking of writing a response to Steve LaPrade's Cloud-cuckoo-land suggestion for fighting AIDS and giving absolution to Anita Bryant, but jmc's article did the job quite nicely. Bryant may have been manipulated by her then-husband and other male leaders of the Save Our Children abomination, but she participated willingly and enthusiastically in that hate campaign and she got a lot out of it (including a celebrity status that she never had before). She also did a lot of harm. LaPrade may feel a need to make peace with Bryant. I don't.

Keep up the good work. The latest issue looks great.

In support,
Bob Funk

The Anita Bryant debate continues

Dear people,

Now that some of the excitement may have died down about Anita Bryant, let me add the following.

- 1) Thank you for letting my story run, knowing that you would get some heat over it.
- 2) Although some of the staff probably were deeply upset over what I wrote, they did a professional job with no type glitches.

3) Thank you all for picking a craftsman like jmc to do the counter opinion. The gentleman is obviously bright, well-informed and knowledgeable. Most important, unlike many op-ed pieces, his work added extra facts to the debate and greatly improved the readers' knowledge.

The only real objection I had to jmc's column was his implying I was sexist and stupid. If you check my story, I simply stated some felt a certain way about gays and attacks on Anita (several TV preachers jumped on that bandwagon). I personally do not.

But I must say I was in error in an earlier piece when I referred to "gay writers." Straight readers may have trouble understanding why gays who are writers might object.

Let's put it this way. Is it correct to call an Afro-American who writes a "black writer" when one considers some blacks write almost exclusively about the black experience (Richard Wright, James Baldwin), some write about it but write about many other issues (Ralph Ellison, William Raspberry), and others scarcely touch on it in their work (Frank Yerby, the historical novelist. Most readers didn't know for years that he was black.)?

The same works for gays. Some, like John Rechy, deal heavily with gay matters; some, like Gore Vidal, deal with them but write about a host of other matters; some stay in the closet.

I also agree with jmc that Anita Bryant was off-base with her attacks on feminists.

jmc raised the excellent issue of how by combatting gays in private schools, she caused them grief in housing and other employment. His research about her past quotes helped show readers why gays feel so strongly about her. He gave details that my story was short on.

I sense jmc can't understand why I think Anita might change. Well, I've seen Barry Goldwater go from working to integrate the Arizona National Guard in the 1950's to attacking several civil rights laws when he ran for President. I saw John Profumo go from a scoundrel in a British scandal to an award-winning volunteer for the underprivileged. I saw Charles Keating go from a man concerned about pornography and our nation to a kingpin of the savings and loan rip-off. I saw Charles Colson go from a Nixon thug to a concerned spokesman for prisoners. And it is harder to believe some of these could change than Anita Bryant.

Let me add this: whether a reader is gay or straight, he should read three books to learn more about AIDS.

1) ...And the Band Played On--the expose of how the Reagan administration refused to give AIDS research the funding it needed.

2) Ryan White: My Own Story--it tells about the physical problems of AIDS sufferers and the lack of compassion showed them and their families. His profile of the hostility from his church will anger any true Christian.

3) When AIDS Comes to Church--this book by Florida Baptist preacher William E. Amos Jr. tells what churches can do to help AIDS sufferers and their families.

Finally, be sure to keep running Lambda news. The outrages there could often outrage gays and straights. And the media ignores those issues.

Thanks again for the hearing.

--Steve LaPrade

P.S. It occurs to me that jmc may know of other books on AIDS that need a wider audience. Please sound him out and print his list if you print the three I cited.

jmc responds:

Aw, shucks Steve, much more praise and you're likely to turn my head. But the Post never assigns stories; all articles are written by the author's choice.

I do agree that people can and do change. You left out the classic example; Ronnie Reagan switching from liberal Democrat to conservative Republican to better exemplify the corporate image of the sponsors of "Death Valley Days."

It's not enough just to change. Each of your examples took public action in support of their changes. Bryant has not to my knowledge done anything publicly to indicate any shift in her position. If she ever does, let me know.

In reviewing the two articles, I think now that "stupid" was a little harsh. I stand by sexist, and your letter reinforces my stance. Every single one of your Afrikan-American authors is male. All of your gay authors are male. All of your changed people are male. The authors of all of your AIDS books are male. In at least one place you refer to the reader as "he."

These indicate to me sexism on some level, whether conscious or not. The concept of a universal pronoun "he" excludes over half of the human race. Get used to "s/he" instead.

Based on past performance, I'm always highly suspicious of church-related material on AIDS. But, I haven't read Amos' book, so I'll reserve judgment. To your list I would add Women, AIDS and Activism by the ACT UP New York Women and AIDS Book Collective. The documentary Common Threads, about the NAMES Project AIDS quilt, is also excellent. On a different subject, read James Baldwin's Giovanni's Room to see that he didn't only write about the Afrikan-American experience.

Thank you for taking the time to keep this dialogue open.



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ISU's sexual assault task farce

In late January, 1991, a Sexual Assault Task Force was formed at ISU, according to its mandate, "to deal with rape and sexual assault and to provide for its survivors."

Soon after its formation, this committee immediately defined its short term goals, which featured such radical proposals as having a booth during Festival ISU "to be staffed by men and women, preferably some highly visible athletes and student leaders," and an "Exercise Your Right: Run Against Sexual Assault."

With lightning efficiency, one of these short term goals has become reality. For, in just ten months together, the task force already has implemented a plan to combat rape at ISU—a jaunt.

On September 26th, the "Exercise Your Right" run was held. Though the results cannot be measured immediately, I assume numbers of potential rapists out there were rehabilitated once they discovered that ISU considers rape such a serious problem that it is willing to fund a rape task force, which, in turn, will go as far as organizing two mile jogs through town to combat rape.

Friends of mine have equaled my enthusiasm for the "Exercise Your Right" run. The concept, one peer revealed, was to teach women to handle sexual assault by "running away!" That way, when "you are in a rape situation, you girls will be thankful you stayed in shape!"

The task force, aware of their gem of an idea to hold a "rights" run, has already agreed they would share their groundbreaking ideas with other universities at the First International Conference on Sexual Assault on Campus, "in a session entitled, 'One University's Approach to Sexual Assault Education.'"

The ISU community can be proud in knowing that it will be represented in front of the whole world and God when task force representatives tell of how a run has highlighted our educational campaign against sexual assault.

Not content at stopping with the innovative "rights" run to combat rape on campus, the task force has laid out even more work for itself, including a proposal that the President of the university give a public statement regarding ISU's position on sexual assault.

As a committee report reads, "an issue as sensitive and worrisome as that of sexual assault on campus warrants the attention of the highest levels of administration."

Though some skeptics may view this as tokenism, they are missing the immense importance of President Wallace personally stating that ISU is against sexual assault.

As the report states, "Such action will help to heighten the campus community's awareness to the problem." It must be known that our President is indeed aware that sexual assault occurs on campus!



But, I ask, why stop with him? Each and every Provost, Dean, Chairperson, and all other administrators should likewise publicly announce their awareness that sexual assault occurs on this campus.

More progressive thought on the part of the task force is evidenced by its proposal to actually have student representation on the committee. Four students would be added, and, according to the committee's report, this would include "at least two male students and two students from the Greek system."

What foresight to see that students may also be able to contribute to a committee made to deal with student problems. The sensitivity of the committee's members is also apparent in its proposed recommendations for dealing with accused students, who, as the report explains, will need "counseling and support as [their] behavior is questioned." It is good to know the task force will support accused students while their "questionable behavior"--rape--is investigated.

Other proposals include the development of a "Survivor Assistance Staff" to ensure "that the survivor [has] clear and consistent support and guidance." Who will "guide" these victims, you ask? No need to worry, as that will be determined by the task force made up of the same minds responsible for the "rights" run--in other words, the survivors will be in the best of hands.

While some skeptics may say this task force is only working toward what to do after the fact of the crime occurred, rather than toward

preventive measures, the task force disagrees, as stated in its original charge: "(ISU) currently has a strong policy for preventing and dealing with sexual harassment."

There you have it, "strong" measures already exist for prevention at ISU, including, well, various strong measures. Thus, the task force really only needs to deal with the crime after the fact.

But, despite the existence of these strong measures, the task force apparently is willing to extend itself to the already sufficient rape prevention program at ISU, as it is calling for an amendment to the code of conduct which will include "the definition of sexual assault" and examples.

This, according to committee reports, "will communicate more clearly to students that such behavior is unacceptable." And what better place to put this important message than the code of conduct, as all ISU students do indeed read these codes (as I am sure all ISU students read the student handbook they are sent every year). Numbers of potential rapists will be deterred from committing the act when they remember what they read in the code.

Of course, the committee knows there are those fakers out there who will falsely accuse someone of rape. Thus, they deem it important to accompany the explanation that sexually assaulting someone is wrong with "an explanation of ramifications for malicious and wrongful reporting."

According to an insider, who agreed to speak on the condition of anonymity, the committee had desired to include in its recommendations for the code of conduct amendment that the punishment for lying about rape should be as strong as punishment for rape itself.

Of course my source, always a pessimist, believes this would discourage reporting the crime. Come on--if they are not lying, what do they have to worry about?!

This insider also maintains the task force members "take a shallow view of sexual assault," and are "more interested in having a media event and getting funds for the group." I assume this person was also one of those liberal whiners who complained that last spring's "Hands Across the Quad" ceremony against prejudice was just a media event as well and did nothing toward combating racism on campus.

In just short of a year's time, the task force already has organized an "Exercise Your Right." Aside from this, they have put forth a number of proposals to recommend proposed recommendations.

My disgruntled inside source, however, has the audacity to suggest that the committee has "been together long enough to accomplish more than they have."

The task force is aware of the amount of time tasks such as setting up runs can take. While they concede, according to minutes of a past meeting, "that they have accomplished much during the . . . months it has met," the "charge" of the group made at the beginning could not possibly be completed in five months as originally thought, and thus a "12-18 month time frame" is more realistic.

As for the disgruntled anonymous source of this piece, I only can think to say, "You can't please all of the people all the time."

(I am happy to report the task force plans to hold the run annually, every fall semester.)

--Richard Les



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... on the decline of language

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Sarasota FL 34236

Dear Mistress Hip Person:

During our breaks, me and my partners on the South Florida whanker squad like to discuss the social and political implications of your column. We was surprised and shocked to find out that one ain't supposed to use the word "quotes" as a noun. You said it was incorrect and that using the word "quotations" would increase the exactness of one's usage.

If there's anything that us guys on the boner patrol prize above all else, it's exactitudeness in our usage. We was wondering if it would also be correcter and more exacter to say "examination" instead of "exam," "notations" instead of "notes," "gasoline" instead of "gas," "omnibus" instead of "bus," and "pianoforte" instead of "piano." Also, maybe we should call yous Mistress Hip Person, just to be really correct and exact?

These issues are very important to working stiffs like us who are trying hard to keep the world safe from onanism. Thanks for lending a hand.

Yours very truly,
Manny, Lefty, and Lou

Dear Fellas,

Ms. Hippie is widely known for throwing her body in front of the locomotive of linguistic history, and she realizes that the language will continue to degenerate (or, as linguists gently put it, to simplify) with or without her rantings. However, Ms. Hippie enjoys blustering about its decline and will persist.

Your examples, however, are really not quite the same as the "quotes/quotation" situation. Our language is graced with such distinctions as parts of speech, and making a shorter noun from another noun is not nearly as offensive as making a noun out of a verb, like in the use of "quotes" as a noun. Ms. Hippie also struggles bootlessly against the wrenching of nouns into verbs, like in "contact" and "impact," when perfectly good verbs are already available--"call" (even better, "write") and "affect."

However, if the three of you are happy with the way you speak and you have no complaints from loved ones, Ms. Hippie doesn't think you need to change. Remember, the point last issue was one of politely altering one's speech to accommodate another's more refined tastes.

If you think that Ms. Hippie is fighting a losing battle in trying to keep the language strictly in line, consider the futility of your own cause. Good luck.

Dear Ms. Hippie



... on those justice-minded men

Dear Ms. Hippie:

It's been quite a while since I last wrote to you. Your column is my favorite.

I was going to rant and rave about these pushy biblethumpers trying to impose their narrow-minded "principles" on the US populace; however, just let me state this:

What's all this bullshit about not allowing taxpayer dollars to provide cost-free and safe abortions for those that want/need them? Why th' hell isn't anyone stating that pro-choicers pay taxes too?!

What are these white, male, bible-thumping sons of (whatever) telling women what they may or may not do with their own bodies? Who do these pricks think they are? Where are the so-called justice-minded men that need to punch the shit out of these oppressive nosy pricks? That's what I want to know.

Love and Peace,
Mike L.

Dear Mike,

Well, Ms. Hippie is certainly glad that you decided not to rant and rave.

She thinks that those justice-minded men may have qualms about punching out others. Or maybe they're all at home irritating each other with their domestic habits (see next letter).

P.S. A Post staffer is checking on the local problem you also described in your letter.

... on communication

Dear Ms. Hippie:

I've reached the end of my proverbial rope and I am writing to you as a final plea for rational advice. I am hoping your existential wisdom will be able to offer some solace to my troubled soul. You see, I have this problem; well actually it's my partner's problem. No, he is not cheating on me with my best friend, and no, he

didn't blow our life savings on a weekend drunk at Little Alice's. He, well, he sort of... mumbles. Constantly.

At first I thought we were strong enough to weather this tragedy, but as of late, I have found myself saying things like, "Your mumbling has been a constant annoyance for two years!" This is not the first of our many tragedies. There was the time when he would not tightly screw the tops back onto our herb jars--and I'll never forget the tormented weeks when he carelessly forgot to burp the butter tub. Yes, we have had our share of problems; I can admit that.

What I desperately need from you is a solution to his mumbling. My partner's solution has been to cup his hand in megaphone fashion when he talks to me and loudly overenunciate every syllable. Ms. Hippie, it's tearing us apart.

"A Distraught Boy"

Dear Distraught,

It seems that you have not only a problem (mumbling) but also a metaproblem (discussing the mumbling, which doesn't sound too successful). First, let Ms. Hippie give you some theoretical background and then a list of steps to follow exactly.

The problem is not just his mumbling, because if you didn't mind ignoring it or asking him again and again to repeat more clearly, it wouldn't be a big deal. You attach some meaning to his mumbling that makes it very disturbing to you. For example, to you, does it stand for an unwillingness to communicate? Or an unwillingness to change a habit he's probably had for years? He's not mumbling just in order to irritate you--you haven't been together long enough for that.

So, here are your directions:

1. Figure out what is the meaning you are attaching to his mumbling. For example, maybe you are disturbed because it means to you that he's refusing to communicate, and communication is really important to you. Or whatever: just try to articulate what's underlying your distress with this particular habit.

2. Get him to agree to a brief (like ten minute) conversation on the subject, and explain whatever you figured out in #1. When he knows you're trying to look at this as a mutual, dynamic problem, he will probably feel more like dealing with it.

3. This is the hard one. Get him to name a habit or behavior or speech practice (see the first letter above) that he'd like to see you change. We know from your letter that you have some impressive quirks yourself (burping the butter tub??).

4. Agree between you to each try to change the pesky habit for a week--not for a perfect record, but just a heartfelt try. During the week, agree not to discuss the habits. (Believe it or not, some people confuse a little discussion with nagging!)

5. At the end of the week, talk it over a bit; then agree to do something you both like to celebrate the progress you made. After you've done that, you're probably okay without a list of steps, or you can make your own.

As you can tell from Ms. Hippie's unusual seriousness and volubility here, she thinks about problems like yours a lot. In fact, let her direct you to an excellent couples book by Aaron Beck, called Love Is Never Enough, because it isn't.

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GALA News

Schedule of events

October 23--Gays and the Military

Why are gays automatically banned from military service? Why do we all seem to love a man in uniform? What does the Navy really think about lesbians? Find out tonight! Based on Alan Berube's Coming Out Under Fire.

October 30--Halloween social

Ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties and things that go bump in the night? That's probably us. Join us in celebrating the gayest holiday around.

November 6--Coming out

Are the rewards of coming out greater than the costs involved? How far should each of us come out? Plus tips on approaching family and friends.

November 13--A House Divided*

Various views on gay male-lesbian female separatism within the gay/lesbian community/ies. Is separatism inevitable? Is it necessary?

November 20--Gays and the Parties

Postponed from an earlier date. Find out where the major parties stand on the issues that affect you.

November 27--no meeting

December 4--Alice's Tea Party

The final meeting of the semester. Elections for spring 1992 Executive Board. Then come the refreshments. Awards for the fairy tales contest (more on that in a minute) will be presented and gifts will be on sale for that special someone on your Solstice/Hanukkah/ Christmas list!

December 22--Winter Solstice Dinner Party

As winter reaches its peak of darkness, friends will gather to celebrate the shining of brighter light on the lesbian/gay/bisexual movement. A dinner party by invitation/reservation for those in town for the season. A banquet room will be reserved, with costs divided among those in attendance.

Meetings are subject to change. Call the Phonenumber for more information or to volunteer to moderate a meeting. An asterisk means that a coordinator is still needed for that event.



For more information on any GALA activity, meeting times, or locations, questions, problems, or just to chat (we Phonenumber volunteers get so lonely!), call the Phonenumber at 438-2429. Peace.

--jmc

Lesbian ex-soldier to speak at ISU

Miriam Ben-Shalom was discharged from the U.S. Army Reserve for being lesbian. Her battle against the military's gay exclusion policy took her to the steps of the Supreme Court. She will be speaking at ISU on Friday, 8.

In the course of securing funding for her appearance, GALA won a battle with the University Forum Committee. Initially Forum was reluctant to fund the event unless the format was a debate with a representative for the military. After meeting with Forum, we were able to convince them that this was an unfair restriction, and they removed this barrier.

Come out, come out, wherever you are

The fourth annual National Coming Out Day was observed October 11. Once again this year thousands of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people took NCOD's theme of "take your next step" to heart and did just that.

In Central Illinois, GALA observed NCOD for the third consecutive year. This year GALA distributed 1,500 fliers at ISU and Wesleyan featuring pictures and short biographies of "gays, lesbians and bisexuals who have shaped our lives." A partial list of those pictured includes Lily Tomlin, Alexander Hamilton, James Baldwin, Rita Mae Brown, Langston Hughes, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Harvey Milk. In all, 30 people out of the hundreds to choose from were selected.

The following article was written by one of this year's new GALA members and originally appeared in GALA's *Community News*.

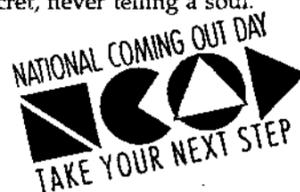
Coming out of the cornfields

Interstate 39 ends at Lostant. Seeing that I could go no further, I allowed myself a moment's rest while I surveyed the landscape. Forty-five miles to the south lay ISU, where I would be going to school. I still had a long journey ahead of me, so I reached in my backpack, retrieved my sickle, and proceeded to chop a path southward through the cornfields.

I came upon a section of cornfield choked with grapevine. It was very hard to cut through. I thought about my Catholic high school days. I had been a rather depressed child. I had managed to hide it away quite neatly, though. I had lots of secrets then; horrible things about myself that I didn't like, that God didn't like. My soul was going to be damned to hell, and I thought it was quite unfair, because I couldn't understand why.

Finally I managed to cut a path through the grapevines. I found that there was too much goodness in me for me to be "damned to hell" because of one flaw in my personality. (Yes, I still saw it as a flaw.) But finally I could listen to myself say it: I was a homosexual.

The next section of the cornfield was muddy. I trudged through it alone, my feet sinking into the mud. The next phase of my life was lonely. I trudged through it alone, my heart sinking into the mud. So I was homosexual; nobody else was. I walked the halls of my small Catholic high school knowing I was the only one. I kept it a secret, never telling a soul.



OK... YOU'RE GAY. DO YOU HAVE TO ANNOUNCE IT TO THE WORLD?... YES!

At last the ground firmed up and I began to make good time. It had been March of my senior year when I met my first boyfriend. Through him I met lots of people, and I discovered that the Illinois Valley was not as straight as its residents presumed it to be. It was around this time that other students began to notice a change in me, signs that something was "not quite right."

The rows of corn in the next field were set wide apart, so I was able to put away my sickle. I found that after going out with my boyfriend, I was able to come out to a few of my close friends. And then a few more friends. And then a few more.

Finally it got to the point that I didn't really care who knew. That summer I discovered the North Side of Chicago; I must have made a dozen or so trips there. I went to the Pride Parade. I spent as much time away from home as possible.

I was practically running now. The top of Watterson Towers was visible over the corn tassles. It was my intention to come out completely when I got to school. No more secrets or lies for me, just total honesty and openness in the great, wonderful, liberal campus town of Normal. I made ready to leap over the final row of corn.

Suddenly I stopped dead in my tracks. Peering through the last row of corn, I saw for the first time the campus and its students. They didn't look too different from the students at my small Catholic high school.

On the very edge of the cornfield there was a little red newspaper box containing the *Post Amerikan*. Eagerly I popped in a quarter and sat on the ground to read.

According to the *Post Amerikan*, Normal wasn't as liberal as I had envisioned it to be. In fact, it was downright conservative. I became extremely frightened, and I waited until nightfall to run to my residence hall for fear of being lynched.

Eventually I calmed down. I went to my first GALA meeting with a friend who had also chopped his way through the cornfields. GALA was a place to open up and not have to worry about your safety.

I am now at the point where I feel comfortable in Normal. While not as liberal as I once hoped, but it is a step up from the rural hell I once knew. I know there are still many people hiding in the fields. Some are afraid of others finding out; others are still afraid of finding out for themselves.

I've gone through all the stages, and I found I simply could not deal with the fear any longer. Coming out was not easy, but when I wonder if it was worth it I simply ask myself, would I rather be back in the cornfields? I think not.

--Dan S.



Ewing-fest; or, hey, I never said I'd represent everybody

I sleep better knowing that the people elected to represent me in Washington are doing their jobs to the best of their ability. Which is why my recent encounter with rookie Representative Tom Ewing will most likely keep me up nights with screaming nightmares.

Ewing held a press conference at ISU September 18 at the invitation of Student Body President Romney Ruder to discuss two bills which Ewing is co-sponsoring. These bills are the Collegiate Speech Protection Act (CSPA) and the Sexual Assault Victims Rights Act (SAVRA). On the surface each of these bills looks like legislation every good leftie should support, but lurking below the surface are more attacks on our rapidly diminishing civil rights.

Free speech

Ewing explained his support for the CSPA by claiming he believes in free speech. It became readily apparent just what kind of "free speech" he really believes in, because the first several sentences of Ewing's remarks were plagiarized from a letter circulated by CSPA's sponsor Henry Hyde.

CSPA would give students the right to enjoin any attempts made by private universities to enact speech codes prohibiting verbal harassment. All such codes would be subject to judicial review. Of course, all such codes are already subject to judicial review, and at least one has been struck down.

When questioned later, Ewing admitted that students have the right to an educational environment free from harassment, but was unable to explain satisfactorily how universities were to create such an atmosphere while being hamstrung by this redundant bill.

He said, she said

Ewing justified his support of SAVRA by saying that it "would ensure that campus authorities will treat victims with respect." The bill would guarantee the alleged victim certain rights, including the right to civil and criminal investigation of the complaint and access to housing free of a harassing environment.

Unfortunately, the bill strips the alleged assailant of several of his/her rights. The alleged victim would have the right to obtain medical information pertaining to the alleged assailant, including access to HIV test results, before the accused has been convicted of any crime.

Ewing was unable to specify whether the bill would permit this access at the accusation, indictment, or conviction stage, although he supports access after indictment. Nor was he able to recall whether the bill would permit forced HIV testing of alleged assailants at any stage. But gosh darnit, he supports that bill whatever it says!

Among the many problems with this bill is that, as the case of Ollie North has shown us, indictment does not prove guilt. A defendant is innocent until proven guilty, and this bill may provide the means for forced HIV testing on innocent people. Illinois, always ahead of the game, made it legal on October 4 for courts to order HIV testing for accused rapists before conviction. The alleged victim must be protected from HIV and other communicable diseases, but this can be done without invading the privacy of the other party involved.

Speaking of parties, one of the reasons Ewing supports this bill is the high incidence of campus date rape and the widespread underreporting of sexual assault. You should have seen Romney Ruder, who has been doing everything in his power to squelch ISU's attempt at a campus sexual assault survey, squirm when Tom mentioned date rape!

Of the press conference itself, probably the funniest moment came when Ruder, with all the sincerity he could muster, said, "We need to take a stand for all college students." This is the same guy who has made public statements recently to the effect that the military's anti-gay discrimination policy was a "dead issue" at ISU. I guess the stand he takes for gay students is right on our necks.

After the ball

Following the formal press conference, I had the opportunity to ask Ewing some additional questions.

Representative Ewing, would you support HR 1430, which would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation?

"No, I believe you have the right to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation."

Why's that, Representative Ewing?

"I just do, that's all."

Thank you for that well-reasoned position, Representative Ewing.

Ewing also supports the military's ban on gay and lesbian servicepeople and mandatory HIV testing for health care workers. Ewing does not believe that patients should be tested for HIV without consent, but does believe that health care workers have the right to refuse treatment to those who don't submit to testing. This is, by the way, illegal discrimination. I had more questions for him, but an aide in a really bad suit moved in to hustle him off, leaving me with a limp handshake and a bad taste in my mouth.

I left the room and sat down in the hall to polish my notes. The College Republicans in attendance, not noticing me in the hallway, left the building ridiculing me for writing down what Ewing said. Gee guys, just because your opposable thumbs haven't come in yet, is that really any reason to make fun of the rest of us?

--jmc

As we go to press, it's difficult to make a call on the Clarence Thomas confirmation question. Support for Judge Thomas seems to be dwindling, but he may yet end up being another conservative vote on the Supreme Court. In the midst of Congressional hearings on Professor Anita Hill's allegations of sexual harassment, it's impossible to gauge the outcome of the Senate's delayed vote on Bush's nomination for Thurgood Marshall's replacement. The hearings have turned into a carnival: Thomas himself--with his endlessly reiterated references to his grandfather, his poverty-stricken childhood in Georgia, and his and his family's agony--is the main attraction; and Professor Hill has been turned into a freak show as her questioners marvel in their male ignorance at her late-coming accusation of Thomas's harassment.

But if we can't say whether the Senate will finally confirm Thomas's nomination to the Supreme Court or deny it, we do know one thing: Professor Hill's courage in making her accusation public has brought the issue of workplace sexual harassment to national attention. For that Hill deserves the gratitude of every woman in the country, no matter how the hearings and the confirmation vote come out. The mainstream press and tv talkshows now have a reason to explore the dynamics of harassment; their motive may be mercenary, but a full-scale public debate is nevertheless welcome.

For some of us who have been listening to the hearings, the senators' disbelief that Hill could have put up with Thomas's behavior is the most frustrating and infuriating part of the whole

business--as if verbal harassment were not something that women are trained to expect, shrug off, and attempt to ignore even as they struggle with their enormous anger and humiliation. That anybody can think that the kinds of comments and sexual pressure Hill says Thomas subjected her to are in some way unusual, and that a woman would be so surprised by them that she would necessarily bring immediate charges, is nothing short of astounding. Were have these men been? Yet the senators claim to be horrified at the "vulgarity," the "grotesqueness" of the comments Hill has reported. Senator Specter sermonized at one point that he could not see "why in God's name, why in God's name" Hill would continue even to speak to Thomas if he had acted in the alleged manner.

It was even suggested that anyone who engaged in such behavior as Thomas is accused of must be abnormal. If "abnormal" means rare or in deviance from the norm, then Thomas--if he did indeed do what Hill says he did--was just a run-of-the-mill male co-worker.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised at the senators' (professed) shock. It is impossible for men to understand the consequences of the extent to which women routinely put up with a sexualization of their identities at work. Blanket statements about relations between the sexes are usually misguided, but here's an exception: this is something with which men by no stretch of the imagination and in no amount of commitment to feminism can empathize; the different and asymmetric gender roles assigned to men and women make empathy impossible. Women internalize the sexual representations of themselves that harassment

produce, and they internalize simultaneously the guilt that they have been taught to feel for having a sexual identity. That is why we don't always bring charges for harassment, just as it is why we don't always bring charges for rape.

"Our" culture's pervasive tendency to conceptualize women as entirely sexual beings was revealed when "evidence" was given that Hill presented herself "more as a woman than as a worker" at work. The implication here is that "woman" and "worker" are mutually exclusive categories, that we may be one or the other but not both at the same time; the further implication is that in order to be good workers we must deny our womanhood or expect and endure the kind of treatment that Hill says Thomas subjected her to.

I would guess that every woman who works around men has experienced the same kind of completely arbitrary sexualization of mundane matters that Hill describes, if not comments as extreme as those she details. We know how men can turn anything from a can of Coke to our presence in a meeting into an occasion for sexual remarks. What we also know now, thanks to Professor Hill's brave example in standing up to Congress's attempts to further humiliate her, is that we can speak of our experiences in public without losing our dignity and self-respect.

--Sue



Kankakee PWA cites AIDS discrimination



A Kankakee health care worker has filed suit against Riverside Medical Center, claiming that he was fired because he has AIDS.

The plaintiff, identified as John Doe, started a job with the hospital November 5, 1990, in which he was working directly with patients.

When the hospital learned he was HIV-positive, the plaintiff was suspended without pay two days later. On or around January 11, 1991, the hospital formally fired the plaintiff and entered into a contract with him as an independent contractor, performing essentially the same functions. Independent contractors are not eligible for such benefits as health, disability and life insurance as full time employees are.

The plaintiff filed suit September 17, 1991. The suit alleges that Riverside is in violation of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which "prohibits discrimination based solely upon handicap against an otherwise qualified handicapped individual in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

The suit asks that the government cease all such assistance to Riverside until it ends its discrimination against PWAs and PWHIVs. It further asks that the plaintiff be restored to full-time employee status with seniority retroactive to November 5, 1990 and that the court order the hospital to pay his group insurance premiums from that date and to cease discriminating against HIV positive people.

Hospital officials are refusing to comment on the reasons behind Doe's firing. However, in a July 18 interview on mandatory HIV testing of health care workers, Riverside's President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Miller clarified his stance on the rights of PWAs. He said, "[AIDS] is the most serious thing to hit this planet and we've been ignoring this deadly problem because of people's rights."

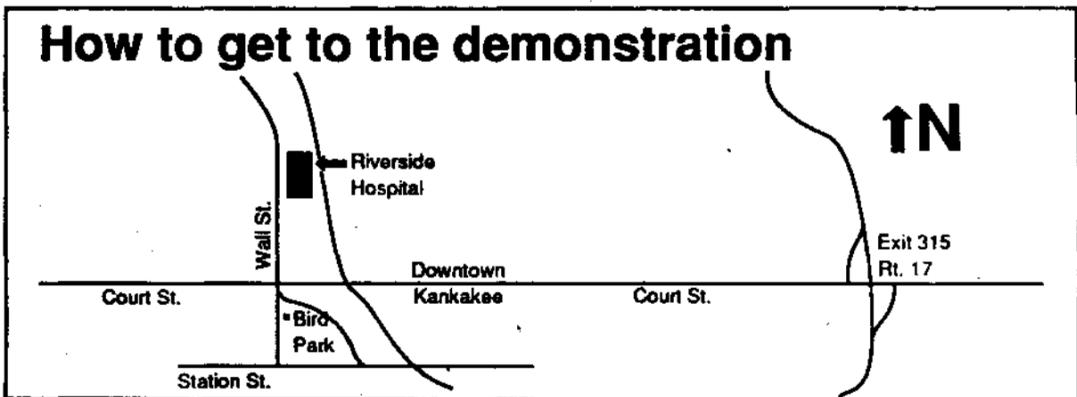
Acting up in Kankakee

Friends Against AIDS Discrimination, a newly-formed Kankakee activist group, lost no time in responding to the lawsuit and to Miller's comments. The goals of the group are the immediate resignation of Robert Miller, the immediate adoption by Riverside of a policy regarding health care workers and patients with AIDS, mandatory training on clinical procedures and sensitivity training on HIV and other infectious diseases, and for Riverside to obey non-discrimination laws.

Organizers were encouraged by the turnout. "Given the fact that we started organizing from square one on the 17th, we were very pleased on the 28th," said FAAD co-founder David Cook.

Media watch

Although Kankakee is a conservative Republican town, media response to the lawsuit and actions has been good. "Coverage has been fair and in our favor for the most part," said Cook. An editorial published in the Kankakee Daily Journal October 2 supported the rights of the PWA and called for a non-discrimination policy from the hospital. In part the editorial read, "If individuals join or pay into a health plan in good faith for many years, they are entitled to coverage. To strip or deny someone of coverage merely because he becomes ill seems severe." Cook called the editorial a "feather in our cap" and he believes it will change many people's minds.



Since the lawsuit was filed, FAAD has orchestrated two demonstrations at the hospital. The first took place on September 21 and was attended by four people. The second, on the 28th, drew 15 demonstrators. The response by the hospital to the second demonstration was to call for a SWAT team, as well as over a dozen additional police and security officers.

Another demonstration, which will include a rally in Kankakee's Bird Park, has been planned for October 26. FAAD has been in contact with people "from all over the country" and are expecting a large turnout. For more information on the case and future FAAD activities, contact David Cook at (815) 939-4996.

--jmc

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Lambda news

Dentist's refusal to treat PWAs discriminatory

AUGUST 5: In a powerful legal ruling, the Chief Administrative Law Judge of the New York Commission on Human Rights held that a dentist's refusal to provide dental services to a patient with AIDS violated the City Human Rights Law.

Finding that the use of universal precautions against HIV transmission eliminates any alleged need to discriminate against HIV positive people, the judge rejected the dentist's claim that his fear of AIDS and his professed lack of certainty about infection control procedures justified his refusal to treat the patient. Equally important was the judge's determination that a dental office is a "place of public accommodation" subject to the law's prohibition of discrimination against the disabled.

The July 31, 1991 "recommended decision" came almost four years after the patient, John Campanella, filed his complaint with the Commission. In February 1987, Campanella visited Dr. William Hurwitz's Manhattan offices for routine dental services. Prior to examining Campanella, Hurwitz questioned him about his dental history, at which time Campanella informed the dentist that he had AIDS. Hurwitz then examined Campanella, took x-rays, and informed Campanella that he needed a root canal, which he would have to get elsewhere.

The following day, Campanella received a letter from Hurwitz claiming that Hurwitz's office would not treat him, purportedly due to a lack of proper sterilization equipment. The judge later found that in fact, the office's basic infection control was adequate.

The judge awarded \$7,500 as compensation for mental anguish, and ordered the dentist to stop discriminating against patients based on their HIV status. The judge also required the dentist to provide the Commission's staff with a bi-annual list of all new and current patients whom he refuses to treat in the next two years. Because Campanella died in February 1988, the damage award will go to his estate.

Federal court opens way to abolition of gay ban

AUGUST 19: In a long-awaited decision that could spell the end of the military's policy of excluding lesbian and gay people, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in Los Angeles reinstated the lawsuit of Reverend Dusty Pruitt, who was honorably discharged from the Army Reserves after she disclosed her sexual orientation in an interview published in the Los Angeles Times. The unanimous ruling upholds the right of lesbian and gay people, under constitutional guarantees of equal protection, to be free from arbitrary discrimination based upon social prejudice and bias.

For the first time, the Court of Appeals' ruling places the burden on the Department of Defense and the Army to prove that the military's policy of excluding lesbian and gay servicemembers is based on legitimate evidence and not founded on prejudicial stereotypes. Because earlier federal decisions have entirely deferred to the military's judgment that "homosexuality is incompatible with military service," this ruling opens the door for a future decision which would declare the military's policy arbitrary and not founded on a rational basis.

Lambda Staff Attorney Mary Newcombe praised the Court of Appeals decision. "This Court has courageously refused to insulate the military from judicial review by ruling that the Pentagon must submit legitimate evidence to the trial court which is not based on the alleged fears of heterosexual servicemembers. For the first time, we will be allowed to give evidence about the irrationality of the policy.

"Under this ruling, we will be permitted to obtain copies of suppressed Pentagon studies which find no justification for the policy, and depose senior Pentagon officials—including Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney—about the purported justifications of the policy. For the first time, we will be allowed to show that the Emperor has no clothes."

— A Clear and Present Danger —



The Pruitt ruling comes on the heels of comments from Cheney, who has been publicly questioned about the policy following the revelation that Assistant Secretary of Defense Pete Williams, who works closely with Cheney and was a major spokesperson of Pentagon policy during the Gulf war, is homosexual. At a recent House Budget Committee hearing, Cheney admitted that the policy's stated concern about gays being a security risk is "a bit of an old chestnut."

Cheney later commented that the policy was based on concerns about service in the field—an allusion to the old platitude that straight soldiers will refuse to serve with gay soldiers. This complaint echoes the same stereotype offered in support of a racially segregated military. Racial segregation endured in the military until President Truman issued an Executive Order in 1948 that desegregated the armed forces. Under the Ninth Circuit ruling, similar rationales premised on the prejudice of heterosexual servicemembers may not be used to justify the exclusionary policy.

Paula Ettlbrick hailed the decision, saying, "Not only does this decision lay the groundwork for a reversal of the military's ban, it also reaches beyond the military context and holds that the Constitution protects lesbians and gay men from arbitrary discrimination based upon the prejudice of others."

Heartened colonel continues fight

In the wake of the Pruitt decision, a lesbian colonel in the National Guard is fighting in Seattle to preserve her 25-year career. Colonel Margarethe Cammermeyer, Chief Nurse of the Washington State National Guard, was awarded the Bronze Star for her service in Vietnam and was selected as V.A. Nurse of the Year in 1985. She now faces discharge proceedings after an administrative hearing board concluded that it was their "sad duty" to recommend Cammermeyer's discharge based on her lesbianism.

Discharge proceedings were initiated against Cammermeyer after she acknowledged her sexual orientation to a Defense Department investigator during a review of her security clearance. The investigation was precipitated by Cammermeyer's application to the Army War College, where she hoped to gain additional credentials that would support her candidacy to become Chief Nurse of the National Guard.

Mary Newcombe, who represents both Pruitt and Cammermeyer, observed, "The Pruitt decision properly places the courts above the military. Colonel Cammermeyer will now also be entitled to a trial. The Army will be placed in the impossible position of presenting legitimate evidence to support Cammermeyer's discharge which is not founded upon pre-existing stereotypes about lesbians and gay men."

Lambda Staff Attorney Sandy Lowe, who has worked on Cammermeyer's defense, commented, "It is incomprehensible that Pete Williams is qualified to serve as a top national security advisor and Assistant Secretary of Defense, while Greta Cammermeyer is not qualified to be a nurse for the National Guard."

New York judge upholds gay teachers' domestic partner lawsuit

AUGUST 19: Lambda announced the landmark ruling of a New York court recognizing that lesbian and gay employees have a legal right to sue for health insurance benefits for their domestic partners. The ruling in Gay Teachers Association v. New York City Board of Education represents the first time a state trial court has upheld a series of claims alleging sexual orientation and marital status discrimination for failure to extend benefits to unmarried domestic partners.

Lambda represents three gay employees of the New York City school system, their longtime domestic partners and the Gay Teachers Association in the precedent-setting case. The suit, filed in May 1988, claims that the Board of Education's policy of providing health insurance only to the families of married employees and not those of unmarried employees violates the civil and constitutional rights of unmarried employees. Two of the couples involved in the suit have been together for nearly two decades. The third is a lesbian couple with a child.

"This is the most significant civil rights breakthrough to date for lesbian and gay employees," declared Lambda Legal Director Paula Ettlbrick. "The court has given teeth to the civil rights laws by recognizing that lesbian and gay employees are entitled to equal pay for equal work. That right includes equal benefits for our families."

The U.S. Commerce Department has determined that, on average, up to 38% of an employee's compensation may consist of benefits beyond salary.

In her opinion, Judge Karla Moskowitz of the New York State Supreme Court recognized "the need to go beyond the labels 'spouse,' 'husband' and 'wife'" in reviewing a public agency's practice of providing health insurance benefits. By adhering to "the traditional view of 'legally married,'" the court "would be rejecting 'the reality of family life' in this day and age."

The court rejected the city's arguments that the cost of extending benefits to lesbian and gay employees justified the exclusionary policy. The court also rejected the argument that extending benefits "would require the Board of Education to investigate the nature and conduct of teachers' relationships."



P-FLAG: What is it?

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization founded in 1981 to help members learn to understand, accept, and love one another. With over 200 local chapters and information hotlines across the United States, Canada, and six other countries, P-FLAG stands as the only group of non-gay people working exclusively for gay and lesbian rights.

P-FLAG works to end the alienation that often results when gay men and women disclose their homosexuality to their families and friends. By working with schools, community leaders, and the general public, and by distributing educational materials, P-FLAG builds bridges of understanding between gay persons and the heterosexual community.

With the spread of the AIDS epidemic, P-FLAG has taken up a special mission to demand government funding for AIDS research and support services. Parents of gays and lesbians have shown a remarkable ability to communicate effectively with government leaders on behalf of their children and other gay people.

P-FLAG also works through the national media and lobbies Congress in a continuing mission to eliminate hate crimes and to end discrimination against lesbians and gay men. Although involved in many levels of AIDS and gay-related issues, P-FLAG's primary purpose is to promote greater understanding while breaking down stereotypes and myths about lesbian and gay life.

If you are interested in finding out more about the P-FLAG chapter nearest you, please write:

Parents and Friends of Gays and Lesbians
1012 14th Street NW., 6th Floor
Washington D.C. 20005



"It's my parents. Quick, help me think of something heterosexual to say."

Waiting for the smoke to clear: a review essay on "Paris Is Burning"

What is happening in Bloomington-Normal these days? "Barton Fink" and "Paris Is Burning" opening at different theatres on the same weekend (October 4-6)? What could come next? A feminist bookstore? A truly innovative restaurant? A Democrat in the White House?

Not a World War II epic

"Paris Is Burning," Jennie Livingston's much publicized and rather controversial documentary about Harlem "Drag Balls" is currently playing at the Eastland Mall, though hardly to sell out crowds. Poor attendance may be due to the nearly total lack of advance publicity. I mean, "Having A Ball..." the General Cinema's teaser in *The Pantagraph*, seems pretty ambiguous to me.

Certainly, the older man three rows ahead of me must have found it so. He abruptly stomped out ten minutes into the film, flailing popcorn and indignation. He left the theatre to an obviously heterosexual (but well-behaved) couple and me.

If that guy charged off to see something safe, such as the re-released 1960 Kirk Douglas togas and gladiators flick, "Spartacus" (currently playing at the University Cinema on Main St), he's in for another trauma. Universal's restored *that* bath scene, which features Laurence Olivier asking his slave boy Tony Curtis if he eats oysters and snails, or just oysters? And if just oysters, is it because he finds the eating of oysters moral but the eating of snails immoral? Remember, young and well-muscled Curtis is attending naked, "decadent" Olivier—just the two of them, all alone in that steamy Roman bath...

"Paris Is Burning" (Not "Is Paris Burning?" a World War II adventure flick of the 1960's) opens in 1987 and ends in 1989, focusing exclusively on the African-American and Hispanic-American, gay-transvestite communities in New York City.

Livingston opens her film by introducing us to two African-American gay men, Pepper LaBeija and Dorian Corey, both of whom have been participating in various Harlem drag balls for the last 20 years or more. Corey and LaBeija have witnessed the evolution from genuine drag balls interspersed with various competitions for trophies to something that more closely resembles a pageant or athletic competition. And the competition becomes positively cutthroat.

And you thought the Olympic Trials were tough

The film documents the amazingly Byzantine competitions that now comprise these "balls," which more than one competitor compares—aptly—to the Olympic gymnastic competitions. So slight a thing as the coach stepping onto the court can give the Russian judge reason to disqualify an American gymnast's performance. In the "Paris Is Burning" competition, a man competing in "Slightly Fey Male in Evening Dress" (or some such category) is disqualified when one of the judges realizes the competitor is wearing a *woman's* and not a *man's* chinchilla coat (the button side gives him away, you know). Same difference as the Olympics or the Oscars, many participant/commentators tell us, and Corey and LaBeija's concur.

We could use a little mother-wit here

LaBeija's and Corey's commentaries frame the film in a way Livingston clearly means to use as moral bookends. These men emerge as bemused elder statesman, one minute shaking their heads over the younger generation's preoccupation with designer labels, and the next speaking movingly of the adolescents and young men, abandoned or disowned by families who refuse to accept them for what they are.

Now what we need is a reality check

We meet a bewildering, overwhelming number of these younger men—some of them barely pubescent—and through them we learn of an enormously resourceful, richly and intricately-varied subsection of the gay subculture. We see them prepare for competitions at the balls. Not just traditional and stereotypical drag impersonations of female entertainers, but in a whole series of categories of dress and behavior called "realness."

"Executive realness," "military realness," "homeboy realness" and various forms of "female realness" all demand that the participants not only *dress* the part of an executive or a street tough, but convincingly *act* the part as well. Some participants enter in a variety of categories, playing street tough one moment and *femme fatale* the next. But the object at every stage is to see if individual competitors can conceal their gayness: that is not "give themselves away" by gesture or walk as gay. The emcees and judges emphasize from the rostrum that such competitions serve as an essential survival technique. Learn the role you drag well enough so as to avoid a savage beating by the gay bashing hoods out on New York streets.

Whose drag shall I wear today?

Ultimately, both Livingston's and her interviewees' point is that *we all*—male and female, people of color and white folks, women and men, straight, gay and flexible—do a kind of drag. We all assume masks and guises and disguises depending on the roles we wish to play. It is only an accident of nature or circumstance that forces these men and boys to act out those roles in a fantasy context rather than in the context of day to day living.

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Paris in your pocket

If you don't think that's a point with more than a little merit, then take a tour, as I did after the show was over, through Eastland's food court, do a little shopping, and see if you don't find yourself looking at store employees and other customers from out of the corner of your eye.

Just in case you're not getting it

Possibly the most effective strategy in "Paris Is Burning" is Livingston's frequent cuts between the "Paris Is Burning" competitions and people on the streets of New York or shoppers in upscale malls and restaurants. Sometimes we'll see one of the many younger transvestite competitors out in a mall, in drag, passing for a woman.

We see in particular Octavia Saint Laurent, a transvestite-cum-transsexual and would-be model, first window shopping in Chanel and *Rive Gauche* boutiques, and getting perfume samples. Later we see her, evidently at the same upscale mall, trying to enter a "Miss Supermodel Search-1988" competition. She talks to an apparently unwitting young African-American woman of the same age about the rules and means of entering the competition for "supermodel."

Everyone says I should be a model

One of the films most poignant moments shows Saint Laurent, standing forlorn and waiflike, but hopeful and attentive, on the fringes of the crowd surrounding Eileen Ford and some of her models. (Ford is owner of one of New York's premier modeling agencies and a sponsor of the "Supermodel" competition). Later, we watch Saint Laurent as she watches Cindy Crawford's, a famous model, every move with a mixture of awe and envy, hanging on her every word as if she were giving a new Sermon on The Mount.

Problems, we have problems

Technically, "Paris Is Burning" is a bit crude, and the transitions from place, year, people, and especially explanations of certain social phenomena (like the origins of shading and voguing) can be abrupt, even a little confusing.

But more problematically, "Paris Is Burning" does not distinguish clearly enough between transvestism and transsexualism. Labeija does argue that sex change operations "go too far" and asks rhetorically "What if you change your mind later?" and answers "It's too late."

He further argues that getting a vagina won't necessarily make things better. In fact, it might make them worse. A woman can be dogged or abused "even worse than a drag queen." Though he tells us that he points this out to the "upcoming children" who turn to him for advice on sex changes (as well as other matters) his seems a lone voice. We meet and see a number of transvestite men who want sex changes, who seem to think that surgery will solve all their problems of disaffection and poverty. And Livingston does not offer a sustained counterargument to such expectations.

On the other hand, "Paris Is Burning" has drawn criticism in some quarters for being "condescending" to its subjects. Frankly, that one's knocked me for a loop. I don't think that's fair or even true.

"Nothing human is alien to me." Or so said Terence Africanus (c.195-159, B.C.), born in Carthage (on the east coast of ancient Africa) brought to Rome as the slave of the senator Terence Lucanus. Lucanus recognized Terence's wit and intellect, educated and eventually freed him. Terence Africanus became a noted Roman playwright, famous for his complex, astute, but immensely compassionate comedies. "Nothing human is alien to me," these men seem to call out to us--tauntingly, pleadingly, matter of factly. And Livingston's film seems to me to resound with loud responses of "Amen and hallelujah, brothers."

Again and again, we listen as these boys and men talk about their lives with great dignity and courage, and we watch them forming their nurturing, accepting, alternate family units or "houses." Even though one man jokingly refers to a house as a "gay street gang," it seems clear that the houses offer the love and refuge their "natural" families can't or won't.



"No, it isn't the margarine darling. I just won first prize at the Drag Ball."

Livingston introduces us to any number of house members and their "mothers": older men who offer guidance and parental authority to the younger men and boys. Pepper Labeija, for example, is "mother" of the "House of Labeija." All the "children" of that house take Labeija as a surname, as do the "children" of other houses (for example, "Chanel," "Saint Laurent," "Xtravaganza"). Livingston presents various house members with affection and empathy, showing them discussing both their own subculture and the dominant culture's attitude towards it in a variety of contexts: the streets, their homes, the balls. To a man, they are articulate and astute, and they make their arguments with eloquence, wit and incisive intelligence.

"Paris Is Burning" disturbs and haunts, though, allowing the audience no comfortable sense of closure or even cultural pluralism, because we are made to recognize the ugly consequences of being different, of the homophobia and misogyny that are so much a daily hazard of these men's lives.

After I left the theatre, I couldn't stop thinking about the fate of Venus Xtravaganza, a tiny, heartbreakingly sweet, young and delicate transvestite, whom we meet several times in the course of "Paris Is Burning." Venus speaks wistfully of finding a good (gay) man, who will give her a stable upper-middle class life, with comfort, grace, maybe even adopted children. But Venus, disowned by her family, unskilled and undereducated, apparently has no recourse but to support herself as a transvestite hustler.

Venus' last on-camera words to us (shot in 1987) tell about the date he'll meet later, "a good-looking young man, who'll take me to dinner, or perhaps for drinks, but I don't necessarily have to go to bed with him [in exchange]."

Toward the end of the film, we are told that Venus died in 1989. The mother of her house, Angie Xtravaganza, tells us that Venus was found strangled, apparently by a trick, in a sleazy hotel. Angie Xtravaganza not only had to identify Venus' body, which had been tossed under the bed for four days like a pile of dirty underwear, but inform the natural family and make the burial arrangements as well. She speaks of the perils of Venus' tricking with mournful resignation. Yet her grief emerges as something palpable.

So ironic it's ugly

I went out to my car and climbed in, unable to shake Venus' image. I popped in my brand new "Saffire: Those Uppity Blues Women" tape and drove on home. The first track I heard, "Annie's Blues," begins with the refrain "Don't want to be nobody's woman/don't want to be nobody's wife/I just want to take care of Annie/for the rest of my life." "Annie's Blues" could be my anthem.

As the song played, I kept thinking about Venus' dreams, dreams she would now never get a chance to pursue. I thought too about my unasked for, unearned privileges of a white skin, and as far as Venus was concerned, female sex. My rejection of everything Venus seemed to covet--pursuing marriage to a "good man" as a life goal, children, "being taken care of," affluence, what she saw as a white woman's natural perogatives-- would I'm sure have struck her as inexplicable, perverse, even downright crazy.

You know, usually I really appreciate a good dose of irony, but this time I just couldn't savor it.

-Dr. Attitude.

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State of my University

In mid September, president Wallace gave the **State of the University** address. This address is an opportunity to assess the past year's events and to provide direction for the future of the University.

Wallace must have been addressing Utopia State University since most of what he said did not describe conditions at ISU. The University Studies Review Committee, chaired by Paul Borg, had a busy and productive year, according to Wallace. The only productivity, however, had been rejection of proposals to include a more diverse and gender-equal curricula coupled with interdepartmental squabbling.

As part of the 60 million dollar facility project, two parking decks were opened over the summer, even though the deck next to Stevenson is not complete nor are the security devices operational as of press time. The decks were billed as the 'state of the art facility.' Perhaps a 'state built facility' would be a more accurate billing.

Students should be happy to hear that there is "the objective of simplifying administrative process, empowering decision making to people at lower levels, improving the quality of service to the university community." Wallace cited **Dean Al Goldfarb as Chair of the Administrative Efficiency Committee**. One of the Committee's recommendations was to reduce paper work by using E-mail. Yet, Wallace does not use his own E-mail system. The Academic Senate will review the recommendations this year.

Money or perhaps the lack of it seemed to be an issue of concern to Wallace. He was most pleased with the \$2.4M increase funding from outside agencies. He also praised any penny pinching efforts which he is calling a "self help" program. But wait, there is more rhetoric. "Noah's principle states that we do not need more people predicting more rain, we need

more people willing to build the ark. Public higher education must do more to help itself because state resources are not and will not be available to bail us out of our continuing fiscal problems. Building the ark is a self-help concept. I applaud your efforts this past year and encourage more to join the effort to float the ark."

Money is not the only problem the Wallace administration has. "It's clear that the university must establish protocols and standards for university publications and design a multi-media approach to enhancing and projecting the university image to the outside world." Maybe ISU has such a poor image because of a high rape percentage in the Greek system, large inefficient bureaucracy, poor on campus housing/policies, polarization between whites and People of Color, between gays and heterosexuals, or the most conservative and outdated university studies program. To quote Wallace's own words, "Lots of people predicting rain but nobody building the ark."

And now for the crown jewel. Wallace alleges Black and Hispanic students enjoy improved enrollment (10% for Blacks and 7% for Hispanics, according to Wallace). **BULLSHIT!** As a Black person, I know painfully all too well how many of my brothers and sisters actually go here. The 10% is at best a first semester percentage. It is not an increase. In fact, enrollment has been falling since the 70's. Further, it is typical that at least half of those students won't even be here second semester.

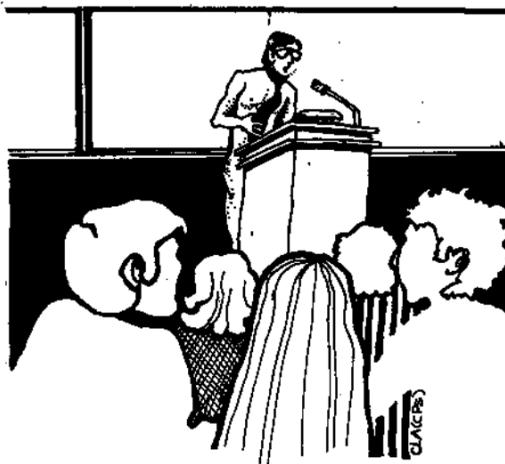
I'll never forget my freshman year in my **Black Music class**. **Dr. Suggs** said "look at the person to your right you won't see them next semester. Now look at the person to your left cause they might not be here either." This is what I think of when I hear the university say that People of Color are doing well and we compare favorably with other state schools. If this is favorable, I hate to think what shitty would be like.

"It is clear that ISU has much work to do, not only to address how we achieve this balance between unum and pluribus but also how to bring the minds of our students a greater understanding and appreciation of the music, art, literature and political thought of many nations, ethnic groups and cultures of the world."

Tom, ISU has had much work to do since you took office.

Take heed to your own words. Stop predicting rain and **BUILD THE DAMN ARK!**

--Satya Sarvodaya III



The Post Resource

The **Post Resource** is a regular *Post Amerikan* feature that serves as a quick reference guide for those interested in community organizations and services. At this time, much of our information is incomplete or outdated. If you need to update information in **The Post Resource**, or if you would like to include information about your organization, please write: *Post Amerikan*, PO Box 3452, Bloomington, IL 61702.

AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power/ Central Illinois (ACT UP/CI)
PO Box 3452
Bloomington, IL 61702
827-6841
Meetings: Alternating Thursdays, 7 p.m. at Up Front Gallery, 102 N. Center, 2nd floor, Bloomington.

Amnesty International/ISU
146 Braden
Illinois State University
Normal, IL 61761
454-2902, ask for Scott
Meetings: Alternating Sundays, 8 p.m., 112 Fairchild, ISU.

Bloomington/Normal Anti-War Coalition
829-3701

Gay And Lesbian Alliance (GALA)
146 Braden, ISU
Normal, IL 61761
438-2GAY (2429)
Meetings: Wednesdays, 8 p.m.
ISU campus
Fairchild Hall 112

ISU Feminist Alliance
146 Braden, ISU
Normal, IL 61761
436-0383, ask for Kate Eisenhour
436-0134, ask for Jenny Melnick
Meetings: Check ISU *Vidette*
for meeting time and location

Men Against Rape
146 Braden, ISU
Normal, IL 61761
Meetings: Mondays, 7:30 p.m.,
Stevenson 352, ISU

McLean County AIDS Task Force
Phoneline: 827-2437 (827-AIDS)
Monday-Thursday, 7-10 p.m.
Info recording at other times.
Emergency/crisis: PATH, 827-4005
Meetings: First Thursday of every month. Call for information.

McLean County Human Rights Coalition
c/o Voice for Choice
PO Box 905
Bloomington, IL 61702
828-3108, ask for Linda

McLean County Voice for Choice
PO Box 905
Bloomington, IL 61702
828-3108, ask for Linda
Meetings: Alternating Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. Call for meeting info.
Newsletter subscription: \$4.00 donation requested

Post Amerikan Newspaper
PO Box 3452
Bloomington, IL 61702
828-7232, leave a message
827-6841, ask for Scott
Meetings: Call for information
Subscriptions: \$4.00 for one year (six issues)

Progressive Student Union (PSU)
146 Braden, ISU
Normal, IL 61761
452-3781, Angie
452-7955, Michelle
Meetings: Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m.,
DeGarmo 551, ISU.

Rape Crisis Center
Use PATH phoneline
827-4005

Reproductive Rights Action Network (RRAN)
146 Braden, ISU
Normal, IL 61761
454-8587, ask for Lainie
Meetings: Thursday evenings,
8:30 p.m., Schroeder 114, ISU

Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC)
146 Braden, ISU
Normal, IL 61761
Meetings: Alternating Wednesdays,
7 p.m., Schroeder 415, ISU.

