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POST AMERICAN



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL

VOL. 25

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NO. 1

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1996



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VOL. 25

NO. 1

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1996

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Post Sellers

Bloomington

AIDS Task Force office (inside)
 About Books, 221 E. Front (inside)
 the Back Porch, 402 N. Main (inside)
 Bakery Ban, 901 N. Main
 Bus Depot, 533 N. East
 Circus Video, (Emerson and Main)
 Common Ground, 516 N. Main (inside)
 Front and Center building
 Law and Justice Center, W. Front (bus stop)
 Medusa's, 420 N. Madison (inside)
 Once Upon a Time, 311 N. Main (inside)
 the Park Store, Wood and Allin, (inside)
 Shockwaves, 313 N. Main (inside)
 Twin City Exchange, 411 N. Main, (inside)
 U.S. Post Office, Center and Monroe
 Wash House, 609 N. Clinton

Normal

Amtrack Station
 Babbitt's Books, 104 North (inside)
 Bus stop, (School and Fell)
 Coffee World Coffeehouse, 114 E. Beaufort
 Mother Murphy's, 111 North (inside)
 Past time Book Exchange, 106 E. Beaufort,
 (inside)

Champaign

Babbitt's Books, 614 E. Green, (inside)

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 828-4473 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*.

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

David, John, Linda, Ralph,
 Sherrin & Winter
 Special Thanks to Beverly

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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 Illinois.....1-800-243-2437
 Local.....(309) 827-AIDS
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 Animal Protection League.....828-5371
 Bloomington Housing Authority.....829-3360
 Clare House (Catholic workers).....828-4035
 Countering Domestic Violence.....827-7070
 Dept. of Children/Family Services.....828-0022
 Gay & Lesbian Resource Phonenumber...438-2429
 Habitat for Humanity.....829-0693
 HELP (transportation for senior
 citizens/handicapped).....828-8301
 Home Sweet Home Mission.....828-7356
 IL Dept. of Public Aid.....827-4621
 IL Lawyer Referral.....1-800-252-8916
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 Lighthouse
 (substance abuse treatment).....827-6026
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 McLean Co. Health Dept.....888-5450
 McLean Co. Humane Society.....663-7387
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 Mobile Meals.....828-8301
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 Central IL chapter.....454-2128
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 abortion assistance.....1-800-322-1622
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 Phone Friends.....827-4005
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 Prairie State Legal Services.....827-5021
 Project Oz.....827-0377
 Rape Crisis Center.....827-4005
 Safe Harbor Mission (Salvation Army)829-9476
 Sunnyside Neighborhood Center.....827-5428
 TeleCare (senior citizens).....828-8301
 Unemployment comp/job service.....827-6237
 Voice for Choice.....828-3108
 Western Ave. Community Center.....829-4807
 Youth Services of Mid IL.....828-7346

Due Date:

The due date for submitting articles to the *Post Amerikan* is: (please laser print your articles in columns of 3" using Palatino 10pt. type if possible.)

March 15



Community News



Quarter century mark Call for entries...please

You might have noticed from the *Post* masthead that we have now entered our "25th" volume! Actually, the paper was founded on April 3, 1972, so, technically we are not 25 y.o., but hey, it's still cause to celebrate! In our next issue, we plan on dedicating a spread to this major accomplishment, but we need your help. Please send us any letters, articles, drawings, etc.. on your personal relationship with the *Post*. Like-- when did you first start reading it, *Postie* reflections, stories that changed your life, yadda, yadda, yadda.

We at the *Post* always appreciate it when we receive feedback from our readers, because not only does it let us know that our efforts aren't for nought and it also provides us with a real connection with our readers.

Please send info to: *Post Amerikan* P.O. Box 3452, Bloomington, IL 61702
Deadline for material is: March 15, 1996

Brosnahan update

The last *Post Amerikan* ran a story on the arrest of ISU professor, Legar Brosnahan. Brosnahan allegedly kicked a female student in the buttocks after the two got into an argument over a grade. At the present time, Brosnahan has been suspended from teaching while the investigation continues.

--towanda!

Post featured in *Journal Star*

Both current and past members of the *Post Amerikan* recently met and were interviewed by a feature reporter from the Peoria *Journal Star*. Look for the results in an upcoming *Journal Star* issue! (Possibly the third Sunday in February.)

--towanda!

Educational Program On Mental Illness

The Journey of Hope Educational Course consists of a series of 12 classes for families of persons with serious psychiatric disabilities. It will start on Monday, Feb. 26 at the Unitarian Church in Bloomington. Classes start at 7:00 pm and end at 9:00 pm.

The course is appropriate for parents, siblings, spouses, adults and teenage children, but not for individuals who themselves are suffering from one of the major mental illnesses. For additional information call Anne or Bob Olsen at 309-454-4938. Bob and Anne Olsen will be the leaders.

There is no charge for the course.

From AMI of Livingston and McLean Counties newsletter

Blue Moon Coffeehouse Spring Semester 1996

The blue moon is the second full moon occurring in a month- a rare and unusual phenomenon fraught with possibility and excitement. The Blue Moon Coffeehouse brings to the Illinois Wesleyan community entertainment presented in a coffeehouse setting. All the Blue Moon Coffeehouse events are held in the Main Lounge of the Memorial Student Center and feature flavored coffees, herbal teas and light pastries (for nominal costs), along with a varied venue of acoustic performances that will span traditional to contemporary folk music, with some reggae and salsa for spice. Entertainment like this is found once in a blue moon and on the campus of Illinois Wesleyan, at the Blue Moon Coffeehouse. Doors will open at 7:30 p.m. and performances consisting of two sets will begin at 8:00 p.m. All shows are free and open to the public.

February 3 Vance Gilbert

Gilbert is a daring new voice in contemporary acoustic music. A black singer-songwriter in a notably white genre, Gilbert has burst upon the scene with a power, force and assurance rarely found in the acoustic world. His smooth, full bodied voice and thoughtful, heartfelt lyrics wring out emotions from despair to euphoria, gliding from extreme to extreme. It has been noted that watching Vance live is like witnessing a one man Robin Williams, George Benson, Garrison Keillor, and Al Jarreau.

February 10 the Nudes

The Nudes answers the not so musical question, what is the most fun you can have with your clothes on...this duo of epic proportions has been engaging audiences from colleges to folk and jazz festivals across the country. Named for the classical nude painting and sculptures that capture sophistication and earthy sensuality, the Nudes strive to express these qualities in their music.

February 24 Al Rose

Rose combines rock and jazz melodies with

February 24 Al Rose

Rose combines rock and jazz melodies with smooth, complex Latin and standard beats, with a touch of wit. Rose's dizzying use of the English vernacular has caused some to describe him as a jazz-folk artist. While bohemian in nature, the man is more Beat than Jazz. Al Rose is a Beat poet trapped inside a singer-songwriter's body.

March 30 Saffire: the Uppity Blues Women

This group will bring to the Blue Moon their exuberant stamp which they put on blues music- this place will be jumping!! It has been a three year process for finally booking this internationally known trio. Moving with ease from blues standards to their own original music, the Blues Women can move an audience to tears from both laughter and sadness. The musicianship of the trio is genuine and studied. Their voices and instruments blend in harmonious precision. This is a band that hits the road and plays gigs from arenas to smoky lounges, always connecting with the audience with their humor and seductive styling.

April 13 Carrie Newcomer

Newcomer will close out the Spring Season at the Blue Moon Coffeehouse. In her last show at the Blue Moon, Carrie wowed an enthusiastic audience of new friends and seasoned devotees that spilled down the steps leading from the overfilled Blue Moon. Carrie Newcomer returns with new songs and stories that are accessible, elemental and wrapped up with that voice. Carrie is a singer-songwriter who is a dynamic performer, able to touch audiences in a very personal way, as well as delight listeners with her midwestern storytelling and humor. She has been reviewed as amazing, haunting, strong but subtle, virtuoso, literary and poetic.

--Source: the Blue Moon Coffeehouse

Letter to the Editor

The Russian people now have had a good taste of capitalism and for most of them that taste has been very bitter indeed.

The Russians are now seeing the real fruits of capitalism. They include: skyrocketing crime rates; an epidemic of fraud, corruption and assorted vices; an onslaught of commercialism, materialism, greed, and a vast spiritual emptiness; poverty, hunger, mass unemployment, homelessness and despair; social Darwinism, with the rich getting richer and the poor poorer; as well as a cutthroat, dog-eat-dog environment which amounts to economic barbarism.

Is it any wonder that so many Russians flatly rejected the pro-capitalist candidates in the recent elections? And of course pro-capitalist candidates are being tossed out in other Eastern European countries as well.

--Allan H. Keith

p.s.--I read the *Post Amerikan* in the late 1970's and early 1980's and had a couple letters to the editor printed in it. Congratulations on continuing the tradition! Very few "underground" or alternative papers have continued publishing. You deserve much credit.



Nature-Speak

"If you talk to the animals,
they will talk to you
and you will know each other.

If you do not talk to them,
you will not know them,

And what you do not know
you will fear.

What one fears one destroys."

--Chief Dan George

What one fears one destroys. Clearly, we as humans have demonstrated that. Our efforts to dominate that which we fear have wrought destruction of the Earth and its creature inhabitants. We humans continue to destroy each other because of differences in gender, race, sexual orientation, and religion. We even persecute one another on the basis of size and shape, of hair length and color. As we destroy each other and the Earth, we destroy ourselves. Our deeply troubled culture cries out for the healing of 'Earth Religions', as were practiced by ancient tribes throughout the world, through which we learn that Nature connects us all and connects us to ourselves.

The ancient Hermetic Law of Correspondence: "As above, so below; as below, so above." teaches us that all things are connected and have significance. Begin to make a study of the language of Nature, of Animal Medicine. 'Medicine' brings personal power, strength, and understanding.

Nature speaks to us every day through the appearances, behaviors, movements, and characteristic patterns of the animals (mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, and insects) we encounter in our lives. The better we understand the Language of Life, the more effective we are in our lives, and the easier it becomes to survive and grow.

The study of Animal Medicine helps us to understand and draw upon the many diverse types of energies embodied in the natural world, and enables us to choose to embody the kind of energies which are most effective in dealing with the different life situations with which we are confronted.

Some animals are greater nurturers or protectors. Some never develop cancerous conditions. Others are experts at survival and adaptation. Some embody courage or playfulness. All have great potential as our teachers.

How is Nature speaking to you every day? Which animals do you encounter on your trip to the grocery store or your walk through the park? In your dreams? What were they doing? What meaning did these meetings have to you?

As you try to interpret and apply what Nature is saying with these signs and omens, you may begin to develop a greater reverence and respect for all life, and greater power and control in your own. You may begin to appreciate how intricately every aspect of nature is woven into your life. You may become aware of your own personal Animal Totems as they trigger a stirring of the ancient fires within your heart and soul.

The study of Earth Medicine has been said to be the constant living of life in a way that brings healing to the Earth and to all our associates, family, friends, and fellow creatures. The goal, as expressed by Sun Bear, is to be "walking on Mother Earth in perfect harmony with the Universe." Such an undertaking requires great humility and intuitiveness, but these too are lessons we can learn as we listen to the Nature-Speak. Three books we highly recommend, and which we used as sources for this article, are:

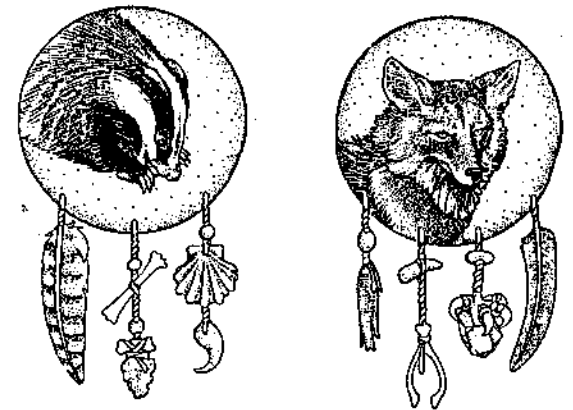
Animal-Speak; The Spiritual & Magical Powers of Creatures Great and Small by Ted Andrews, 1995, Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, Minnesota, 551564-0383, U. S.A.

The Medicine Wheel; Earth Astrology by Sun Bear and Wabun, 1986, Prentice Hall Press, 15 Columbus Circle, New York, NY, 10023

Medicine Cards; the Discovery of Power Through the Ways of Animals by Jamie Sams and David Carson, 1988, Bear & Company, P.O. Drawer 2860, Santa Fe, NM, 87504

If these books are not available at your local library or bookstores, we're sure they would be happy to order them for you. "Through Nature teachings come. To Nature we all return."

--Badger and Coyote



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I Oppose Nuclear Weapons

In the name of the Goddess, the Great Mother of all life, I declare my opposition to nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons are the meanest manifestations of our own dark side. They are the purest projections of our fear and hate. They are an abomination.

I oppose nuclear weapons because I love the Earth and I want her to live. I oppose nuclear weapons because I love our future and I want it to be. I oppose nuclear weapons because I love our children's children's children. I oppose nuclear weapons because I love the act of creation itself. I oppose nuclear weapons because they are wrong.

We must rebel against them.

Blessed Be,

Greg Brown
303 E. Locust #2
Bloomington, IL 61701
(309) 827-5805



An Experiment in Foods

All my life have been an omnivore, heavy on the carnivore. I liked eating flesh and I thought that I would never be able to live without ingesting it regularly, but as I have discovered, meat isn't everything.

It all started with a bet with my vegetarian girlfriend. We were both avid smokers looking for an easy way to quit, so one night I came up with the idea of how we could competitively stop smoking. The idea was that whoever started smoking first had to do whatever the other person said. Knowing of my great love for meat and my disdain for the little vegetarian food I had dared to try, she said that I would have to be a vegetarian for two months. Call it weakness or will, I lost the bet and have been a vegetarian since November 17.

At first it was rough trying to be a vegetarian. I had to carefully chose my meals when we would dine out; my spaghetti sauce became meatless; my pizzas lost their pepperonis; and my chimis lost their chicken. I was a carnivoric wreck. However, it wasn't very difficult to adapt, and I was introduced to some delicious vegetarian foods. I soon stopped referring to the food I ate as "vegetarian crap" and whining about how I missed meat. Being a vegetarian wasn't such a bad thing after all.

Tomorrow is January 19, the end of my designated vegetarianism (I got two days added because my sweetie was generous enough to let me eat turkey on Thanksgiving, and I accidentally ate bacon one day), and I am not especially anxious to go back to my old eating habits. I have discovered these past two months that I don't need meat to make a meal tasty, and that the idea of eating animal flesh isn't what it is cracked up to be. I used to believe that eating meat made me a "man:" the more meat I inflated my belly with, the

manlier of a man I was. Sort of like the big tough mountain-men or Viking type males you see on television voraciously eating a whole leg of a cow or something. That was what eating meat was supposed to make you feel like. Boy, was I wrong. You don't have to be an eater of flesh to be a man.

Don't get me wrong, I do not plan to become a strict vegetarian; There is still room for animal flesh (cooked just right) in my digestive system. I will not, however, be so "meat minded."

Having tried the delicious, and in most cases more nutritious, vegetarian meals, I have decided to expand my appreciation for food and become an omnivore, heavy on the herbivore. I have also found a new respect for people who have chosen the vegetarian life because, as I have learned these past two months, the food service business seems not to take them in to consideration. Though in some restaurants there are vegetarian options, there are relatively few restaurants that specialize in vegetarian food, and in Bloomington-Normal there is only one, and their prices are not proportionate with their servings.

Today is January 26, and having had a chance to put my new philosophy into practice, I have discovered that I am still a happy meat eater. Though I still allow more vegetarian foods in my regular diet than I have in the past, I am not an omnivore heavy on the herbivore as I previously mentioned. Instead I think that a balance between the palate of a vegetarian and my intense carnivoric appetite of pre-November 17 has occurred. For this I am grateful. I have learned that I do not have to be vegetarian or not vegetarian. Not only do I get the best of the world of vegetarian meals, but I can get a hamburger at Mr. Quick's and love them both equally.

--David Hall

Peltier Transfer-- Urgent Call For Help!

Leonard Peltier attended a parole hearing on Monday, Dec. 11th at Leavenworth Penitentiary. During the hearing, which lasted for almost two hours, evidence was presented to demonstrate the reasons why Peltier should be looked upon favorably by the Parole Board. Peltier was represented by Ramsey Clark and Carl Nadler. Arguing for the government was Lynn Crooks, who stated to the parole officer that "somebody murdered those agents. Even if it wasn't him, somebody had to do it" thereby admitting once again that there exists no proof of guilt against Leonard Peltier. A decision will be made within the next five weeks.

Sometime on Tuesday Leonard Peltier found himself hauled onto a plane and flying to a temporary transfer unit in Oklahoma City, OK. He was given no reason for this mysterious move. He was placed in segregation (the hole)

and under lockdown. Peltier was told that he would be shipped to the penitentiary in Atlanta, GA. For his own safety, he has stated that he will remain in solitary while in that institution.

Leonard Peltier and the LPDC are expressing great fear and anxiety regarding this transfer as Atlanta is considered to be a very unsafe prison. We are asking our friends and supporters to intercede for Peltier by phoning the Atlanta Prison at 404-622-6241 and letting prison officials know that they will be held responsible for anything and everything that happens to Leonard Peltier while he is in their custody. Also, voice your concern and call for immediate justice by phoning the White House comment line at 202-456-1111.

The Time for Justice is Now--Free Leonard Peltier

From Leonard Peltier Defense Committee newsletter

Men Seeking Men

Man seeking white male, interested in meeting other white males up to 45 years old, for friends and possible relationship. WM45

Women Seeking Women

GWF Shy, reserved queen-size femme seeking new friends and that special dyke to melt my heart. Life is meant to be shared. Let's meet. GWF2396

Love (post) amerikan Style

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(ADDITIONAL) 21.....22.....23.....
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Another Report From Our

Two rules to live by: 1) Don't *ever* fly in a Russian built airplane, and 2) don't get involved in a fender bender in Russia, no matter how minor.

I recently returned from two more weeks in St. Petersburg, Russia, where I went to do some work with Molly Caliger Lasser, director of The Russian Birth Project. Things in Russia are very different than they were when I was there during the summer of 1994, which made me rather sad. Conditions are so much worse there than they were before, and many things look so much more "American." Many stores now carry that high-gloss look of American stores...chrome, wood, etc. The prices for these items are more expensive than in America. But simpler, cheaper shopping areas where most "normal" Russians shop (as opposed to the "new" Russians or Mafia members) are very expensive now. They have many imported items, including clothing and toys, but they are of the very cheap type commonly from China, though they carry higher price tags than they do here. Finding Russian items is extremely difficult. Food is outrageously expensive there as well. A pound of butter runs about \$2, which is about 80¢ more than I pay here, and groceries in general cost about the same as they do here. Rent is still relatively cheap compared to American prices, about \$200 for a three room apartment, which is a luxury, but people now must pay utilities. One month's utilities average \$11. Most people still live in communal apartments, where they have one room to themselves (sometimes) and shared kitchen, toilet and bath rooms (toilet and bath rooms are separate due to the frequency of communal apartments).

Before you think how great these prices sound, please consider the average salaries and the cost of inflation. When I left there at the beginning of August 1994, you could get 2000 rubles for a dollar (which had increased by 300 rubles in the three months that I was there). Now, you get 4700 rubles for the dollar. Yet, the real Russians haven't seen any real gain in wages, and haven't kept up with inflation. Cleaning ladies at the roddom (a Russian maternity hospital) still make around \$17 a month, midwives still make around \$45 a month, and doctors still make around \$65. The average Russian salary for the real Russians is still around \$100 a month.

The new Russians are the yuppies of the Russian world, who have somehow managed to get involved in business...owning one, importing, working for a foreign company, etc. Yet, even though they have much more money and are actually quite wealthy, even by my standards, there is a price. To be involved in any type of business in Russia, you must be involved in the Mafia. You either buy your business from them, or you borrow money from them to start or expand, or you must sell to them or help them if you want to keep your doors open, or you pay "roof" money. This is what here used to be called protection money. It is money you pay to keep a roof over your business and keep anything bad from happening. This rate goes up continually, and you must pay. As your business succeeds, the Mafia forces you to pay them more. This leads to a cycle of some people getting in heavier with the Mafia, until "decent" people are completely corrupted and can't get out. The "real" Russians have refused to get involved in these dealings and instead are starving.

The American papers report that 60% of businesses in Russia are controlled by the Mafia. In reality, it is closer to 80 or 90%. To be in business in Russia is to be involved in the Mafia, in general. Which leads me to the topic of the war with the Chechens. Most Russians I have spoken with think this is the only good thing Yeltsin has done. America reports Russia's barbarity in bombing the Chechens to force them to come under their rule. Have we ever considered why they are doing this? In Russia, if you talk with anyone, they will tell you that the Mafia "stronghold" is in Chechnya. This is where some of the most powerful Mafia connections lie. They believe that to break this hold and bring the country back under Russian rule will help loosen the Mafia's grip on the country's economy. I did hear this mentioned once on Public Radio here, briefly, and that is the only reference I have heard in America. Every Russian I have spoken with has confirmed this viewpoint. Next time you are appalled by stories of the bombing and the war, think of this, and know that the truth lies somewhere in between, I am sure.

The staff at Roddom 7 hasn't been paid for two months. The corrupt head doctor, in charge of the hospital, has been spending their money on his own investments. When they confront him, his response is, "If you don't like it, don't come back." Yet, they can't go and get a job working at another roddom, because no one is really hiring. With the birth rate getting lower and lower each year, there aren't many jobs for midwives and obstetricians. They can't report him to his supervisors, because the supervisors are even more corrupt. At least the midwives and doctors get free food at work...if you can call it that. While I was there, the roddom was serving water with cabbage in it as soup. The midwives can't quit because there are no other jobs for them to go to, so they go and work every day for free, with the promise of pay next month.

There is a very old joke in Russia, which they have recently been retelling at the roddom. A man of the government was very good friends with a factory supervisor. He told his friend, "We want to test the loyalty of the workers. When you go in tomorrow, call everyone together and tell them they won't get paid for the next six months and we will see what happens." The supervisor did as instructed, and all the employees continued to show up every day, as if nothing had happened. The man of the government told his friend, "Well, that is interesting. They appear to be very loyal. Let's test them more. Tomorrow when you go in call them all together and tell them that on the following day when they all show up they will be hung, and see what they do." The supervisor did as he was told, and after he told them they would all be hung the next day, a man in the back raised his hand, "Excuse me, sir, but are you providing the rope, or should we bring our own?"

I heard some more stories of the 900 Day Siege of St. Petersburg you should know. Gheorghy's "Aunt" Valia had a job working in a field on the outskirts of town planting potatoes for the people. Every day, the workers would try and steal one or two potatoes (which was strictly forbidden) because they were starving. When caught the supervisor would usually just give a stern warning. Once, a friend of hers got caught stealing 10 potatoes. They decided to make an example of this woman, and sentenced her to

ten years in prison, one year for each potato. Valia was married and had a daughter at the start of the war. Her husband was killed immediately in the fight. As everyone began starving, her young daughter was also starving. She did everything to keep them alive, including making soup out of leather shoes, etc. A neighbor somehow got some real food and gave it to Valia for her daughter. Valia gave it all to her daughter, and her daughter died from having too much food. After starving for so long, the food was too rich and too much for her system. She caused her own child to die by trying to save her life.

I was able to go to the banya a couple of times while there. The banya is a wonderful experience! People usually go once a week, and at the public ones there is a men's side and a women's. There, everyone is naked and sits in saunas, sometimes stimulating the circulation by smacking the skin with birch branches, and when they can't take it any longer, they go jump in icy cold water. It helps strengthen your circulation and your entire system, allows you to endure the temperature extremes of Russia better, helps you get toxins out of your body, etc., besides giving you this incredible natural high when you are done. It was after this that we had our little altercation.

Somehow, someone tried to speed around us as we were pulling out of our parking space; he lost control, and ended up hitting a car, shoving that car into another, and then two people hit each other because they were watching the wreck. Most Russian drivers are very inexperienced, and the snow and ice get them every time. The man who did the hitting managed to flag a Volvo driver down, who wasn't even there, paid him off (I saw this whole thing happen) so when the traffic police arrived (not *real* police, mind you...just the ones who handle traffic violations and wrecks), the Volvo driver was acting as a witness against us for the man who hit all these cars. When the traffic police got out of their car, I about died on the spot. They were carrying *sub-machine guns*. Believe it or not, Russia is so out of control, and so dangerous now with the Mafia influence, that machine guns are a necessity for safety for traffic violations. To make a long story short, I got to spend a few hours sitting in the police station, which is more dismal than you can imagine.

I was able to visit three Russian apartments this time, two communal. One communal apartment was lived in by people who had a little more money, and had a TV, their own refrigerator, and a few nice things. It was a husband, wife and son who lived in this room, which was the size of my living room here. Their kitchen was shared with three other households. When they had us over, they had liqueur and champagne, sausage, liver pate, bread and cookies. The other communal apartment we visited was more typical of how most Russians live. These folks were *poor*. A husband, wife and baby lived in this tiny room, and there was a smaller room off to the side that was more for storage, where the brother-in-law lived. For our dinner, we were served herb tea and white rice cooked with sugar. Period. This was all they could afford. They have no TV, and I saw no radio. Colia did have more books than I saw anywhere in Russia. He speaks English very well, and has his PhD in computer science, and, I believe, works for the university. He and his wife have



Woman in St. Petersburg

met people from Canada who are "sponsoring" them by setting up checking accounts in Canada to help them emigrate there. (Canada won't allow you to emigrate there without proof that you have \$13,000 in an account there, and on top of this, must have enough money to pay an additional \$3000 or \$5000, I don't remember which, per person for visas.) Without the help of these kind people, they could never hope to live in Canada, as Colia and Luba have no chance of bettering themselves in Russia or raising the money on their own because they refuse, like so many others, to sell their souls to the Mafia to get ahead. Hopefully, their dreams will come true.

One of the highlights of my trip this time was visiting the Ethnocultural Centre for Children, also called *Kitezgrad*. In Russian folklore, the town of Kietzh is one of the symbols of high spirituality. Only one who is pure in their soul and strong in their faith can hear the sounds of the ringing bells of that submarine town. Created and directed by Tatiana Vinokurove and her husband, Karen Avakjan, teachers here are engaged in the spiritual education of children through the development of creative abilities. From my understanding, they feel that by helping children see the connectedness of all peoples through the understanding of different cultures and cultural histories, as well as religions, these children will find a common "language" and future, promoting peace in the world instead of furthering violence and separation. The program is designed to let the children live successfully within the cultures of different epochs and countries. Starting with the primitive cultures of ancient people, and coming to the pre-Christian culture of Eastern Slavs, the children come to understand Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. It is intended for children to attend the full program after school, three days a week, four hours a day for seven years. After this, they can specialize in the studios. They celebrate ancient Russian pagan festivals, and the staff travels in the summer into the remote regions of Russia, collecting folk art and other cultural "collectibles" for their work with the children, as well as preserving traditional folk songs and stories which they bring back to the children and use for public performances.

Their instruction of the children is through song, music, storytelling and theatre, as well as through art. Children learn ceramics, fine arts, working with paper, singing, playing and making traditional folk instruments, weaving on looms (they each make their own traditional costumes to wear for holidays and performances), basket weaving, painting, etc. All of the programs are interconnected and interrelated.

Do you ever have moments where you experience such beauty in nature, in music, or in a museum where tears come to your eyes? Such was my experience here.

They have approximately 100 students total in the program. Mostly they are poor (the new Russians are more interested in having their children in aerobics), and if they can't afford the fee for the family, they attend for free.

How much does this cost per family per month? 5000-10000 rubles. That is a little over \$1-2 per month of our money. Most of the families couldn't afford any more. The rest of the money is provided by the government, and it isn't much. The staff are all poor and make very little money.

They asked me if I would know of any Americans who would be interested in sponsoring their program. I suggested they take on interns...teach American teachers and artists, who want to do more than just teach art to their students, their techniques of using these mediums in developing a sense of cultural unity in our society. They could earn money to expand the program and pay the teachers more, and further their work throughout the world. I would also love to bring an exhibition of their work here. They have a video they would like to copy for me, and I took pictures, which I'm sure won't do them justice. If anyone reading this has any interest in interning with the program, making a donation, or helping this wonderful program in any way, please contact me and let's help this program out, and maybe help our society at the same time by learning to apply these techniques here.

Each time I've been in Russia now I have been forced to face things in myself...strengths and weaknesses of my character...I am almost embarrassed to tell you the following story, but confession is so good for the soul. I believe fair is fair, and that everyone should be honest and just with everyone else. I am far too idealistic for my own good. Both times in Russia I have had people take advantage of me due to my inability to speak the language, and I am helpless. This time, I was out with the children, who speak fluent English and Russian, buying knitting needles. We stopped to get ice cream for them on the way home. Each treat was 1400 rubles, for a total of 2800 rubles. I gave her 3000. She refused to give me my 200 in change. It wasn't that she didn't have the money...I could see it in her hand...she just wouldn't give it to me. Why? Because I was an American, and they think all Americans are rich, and I couldn't speak her language to argue with her about it. I told the children to tell her she needed to give me my change, and she flatly refused saying, "It is only 200 rubles. She doesn't need it!" Granted, by her standards, I am rich, but I was speechless with fury over the 5¢. Why? It was the *principle* of it. She wouldn't give me my change because I didn't speak the language. It had happened to me repeatedly when I was there before, and it was happening to me again. And it wasn't just the money. I am by nature normally generous. It was the feeling of powerlessness and not being treated fairly.

Later that evening I started looking at it in a more realistic light. This woman was poor, and doing whatever she could to get her money, including freezing her butt off standing outside in a Russian winter every day selling ice cream to earn to living (and I still don't get how those Russians can eat ice cream outdoors in the middle of the winter). I, by being American and part of the capitalistic establishment, am part of the blame for her trials in life, and I DIDN'T need that 5¢ which she knew. I

should have just handed her more money, so it would have been a gift, instead of harboring that resentment, which I am famous for. It was just that I felt so damned helpless. More perspective was then thrown on the situation by the gods, and I starting thinking of how pathetic it was that I felt powerless over a nickel, and I started thinking of the Africans working in the white slave-owners fields, and Native Americans having their land stolen, and of all the men, women and children that have been raped or beaten or forced to serve another throughout all history and today. And I am furious over a very poor woman not giving me my *five cents*. I raised my voice at her because I felt it unfair? I had to ask myself, *what type of person am I that I would-waste a moment's energy on this or become so furious?* Where was my thankfulness for all the blessings that always exist in my life?

Coming home was a trial. Do not ever fly on a Russian built airplane. After having to spend the night in Prague when I hadn't expected to, seeing a police car hit a pedestrian, listening to a man inappropriately yell at someone in the airport (we all rallied to her defense), we got on the Russian plane to fly back to America. I should have heeded all the omens I had, including the headlines of the USA Today that I picked up in the entrance of the the plane being about airplane crashes and gotten off. I didn't. I wanted to get home. The surly man sat across the aisle from me on the plane and almost got into a physical fight with the nice man behind him, and was moved to another seat. We all know we were in great danger of crashing or something, but we don't know the real reason why. We were told we only had 45 minutes of fuel left and would have to land in

Boston to refuel. This was changed and we went on to JFK. After the oxygen getting extremely thin, a burning electrical smell, the lights flashing off and on, condensation forming and dripping on the inside of the plane, the heating/cooling system failing, a loud thunk and loss of altitude and the engines cutting out three times, we landed at JFK and hour and twenty minutes after the decision to not land in Boston was made, with both sides of the runway lined with police cars and emergency rescue vehicles with their lights flashing, waiting to pick our parts up after we crashed, I guess. We all cheered when we landed. None of us was ever told what really happened. My connecting flight that was supposed to leave immediately was canceled, I had to spend the night in NY and leave from Laguardia, almost missed my connecting flight in Cincinnati due to other mechanical failures, and finally got to O'Hare. After 3 days of travel to get home (which I had originally expected to be one) and only 5 hours of sleep in over 60 hours, I sat on the floor and cried tears of joy when I saw my children and husband.

And we almost ran out of gas driving back to Bloomington from Chicago.

--Marcee Murray



News From Voice

PAT SCHROEDER RETIRING

Democratic Rep. Pat Schroeder, the longest serving woman in Congress and a strong opponent of House Speaker Newt Gingrich, has announced she will not seek re-election. "I suddenly woke up and said, 'My whole adult life, I've been here,'" said Schroeder, 55, who is in her 12th House term.

Schroeder is the 14th House Democrat to announce retirement plans this year. Several in the group are running for Senate, but not Schroeder. In contrast, just four House Republicans have announced plans to retire. Source: Pantagraph

PRUSSING TO CHALLENGE EWING

Former State Representative Laurel Prussing has announced that she will run for the 15th congressional seat currently held by Tom Ewing. Prussing, a Democrat, is a strong pro-choice candidate, she is strong on women's issues and the environment. Ewing, a Republican, is anti-choice, has an abominable voting record on women's rights, labor, health care and the environment. Ewing has voted with the extreme right-wing of the Republican party this session and is a supporter of the Contract with America and Contract With The American Family put forth by the Christian Coalition.

If you would like to see a pro-choice candidate represent us in Congress you can call Luellen Laurenti for information about volunteering for Prussing's campaign.

RALPH REED VISITS

The director of the nation's largest right-wing organization made a stop in our area last month. Ralph Reed, executive director of the Christian Coalition, came to Bloomington/Normal to help raise money for his group's Illinois chapter, which is headquartered in Bloomington.

Reed said his mission was to stress the importance of the 1996 elections to state coalition members gathered for a dinner at the ISU Bone Student Center. He said the coalition would be a

driving force behind the largest turnout of "pro-family" voters in history when ballots are cast in the March primaries and the November general election.

According to David Curtin, director of the 60,000 member Illinois Christian Coalition, the state chapter had been attempting to hook Reed for several months. Reed's visit was influenced in part by the state coalition's opposition to the proposed changes in Bloomington's Human Relations Ordinance.

The fund raiser was expected to draw 140 people, but far fewer showed up. Gee, what could that mean? Source: Pantagraph

BAN ON WOMEN PRIESTS IS "INFALLIBLE"

Well there really isn't much more to say is there? Hey, it's an elderly white male, in a patriarchy, claiming that he speaks for God and that God don't want women ordained as priests. Would you believe him? And while we're on the subject, how come most people who walk around dressed in a robe in a big hat who claim that they speak for God just get evaluated or medicated and this guy gets coverage in the New York Times?

Sorry if we're a bit irreverent but this whole "infallibility" thing is wearing thin since women are usually the ones being oppressed by it. Source: New York Times with editorial comments by us.

ABORTION CLINICS INVESTIGATED

The F.B.I. is investigating whether Massachusetts's largest chain of abortion clinics has rigged ultrasound tests to convince clients they need riskier and more expensive abortions, this according to the Boston Globe.

The F.B.I. and Brookline police searched the Brookline office of Repro-Associates on November 30, seizing medical records and documents as part of an ongoing criminal investigation of the clinic owner, Dr. Howard J. Silverman.

The investigation, believed to be in its preliminary stages, is focusing on whether ultrasounds were falsified in order to make a pregnancy appear to be more advanced, which would require more expensive medical procedures to end it. Investigators are also examining whether Dr. Silverman followed through and performed the more invasive and expensive procedures required for later-term abortions.

Dr. Silverman's clinics charge \$300 - \$500 for a first-trimester abortion. After 14 weeks, the procedure gets more complicated and can cost from \$650 to \$700. At 22 weeks, it can cost \$2,100.

Dr. Silverman's four centers are believed to perform about 10,000 abortions a year, about a third of the roughly 35,000 abortions performed each year in Massachusetts.

The Repro Associates clinic on Beacon Street, in Brookline, was not a target of the gunman who killed two people and wounded five others last December at two clinics on Beacon Street. Dr. Silverman also runs for-profit Clinics in Hyannis, New Bedford and Shrewsbury. In 1984, the Board of Registration in Medicine disciplined him for sexual misconduct with an 18 year old patient. As a result, Silverman's privileges to admit patients to five Boston area hospitals were revoked and have not been reinstated. He must rely on colleagues to admit patients to hospitals in emergency cases. Source: New York Times

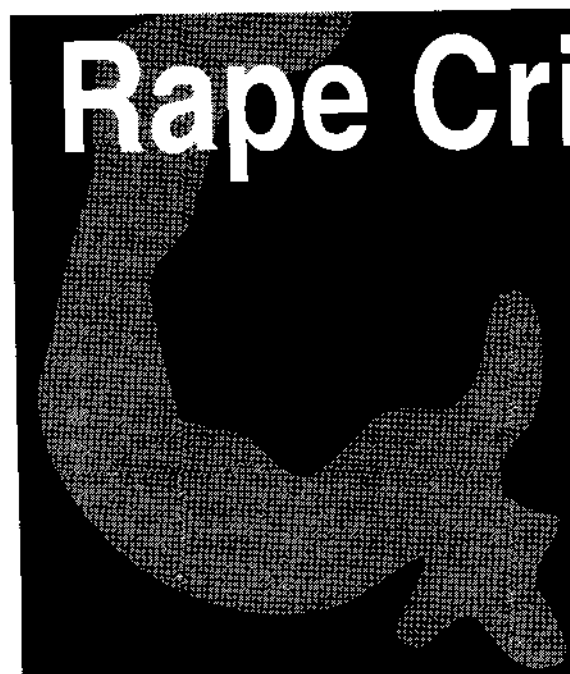
FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN U.S.

A couple of years ago, Meserak Ramsey dropped in on a birthday party and saw a little girl huddled in a corner. Ms. Ramsey, an immigrant from Ethiopia and a nurse, wondered what was wrong. She was stunned when the girl's Ethiopian-American mother said that her daughter, 18 months old, was recovering from the removal of her clitoris and that the painful procedure had been done in Washington, D.C.

"For this to happen to a girl in the most civilized country in the world, for a child to go through this torture - I was enraged!" Ramsey said in an interview. She turned her anger into a national campaign.

None of the few American organizations and several United Nations agencies working on the issue have reliable figures on female genital mutilation in the United States, though anecdotal evidence suggests that it may happen in scores if not hundreds of families. Worldwide, it is estimated that more than 100 million girls and women are living with the results of the procedure, which is done, usually without anesthesia, in the name of destroying sexual sensation. The procedure is sometimes fatal.

In societies where it is practiced, men have traditionally demanded that their wives come to them as virgins and never succumb to sexual temptation afterward. In strong family settings, women - often grandmothers - are the enforcers of the practice, exerting tremendous pressure on succeeding generations of mothers and daughters.



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of McLean County

We're a non-profit volunteer group whose main purpose is to offer assistance and support to victims of sexual assault and their friends and families.

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For Choice

It is becoming apparent to health workers and lawmakers in the U. S. that the practice goes on here among immigrants from several of the 40 or more countries in Africa and the Middle East where mutilation is prevalent. "As you get more and more immigration from countries where this is a practice, particularly recently from Somalia, there are pockets of it popping up wherever you see concentrations of settlements," said Representative Pat Schroeder.

Schroeder has proposed an amendment to an immigration bill now being considered that would require the Immigration and Naturalization Service to warn visa applicants leaving a small hole for urination, until marriage, when a husband can reopen the wound. Infibulation can lead to severe intenal infections.

African and Asian women largely reject the notion that the practice must be understood in a cultural context. Nafis Sadik, a Pakistani physician who heads the United Nations Population Fund, is sharply critical of those who would condone the procedure on the grounds of tradition. "No value worth the name supports the oppression and enslavement of women," Sadik said at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing. "The function of culture and tradition is to provide a framework for human well-being. If they are used against us, we will reject them." Source: New York Times

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 3, (time and location to be announced) A PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE COMMON THREADS OF OPPRESSION - CO-SPONSORED WITH THE McLEAN COUNTY PEACE COALITION

New Year's Resolutions

Are you wondering how you can get involved in working for reproductive rights, peace, justice, women's rights, etc... Well, listed below are the phone numbers of a number of volunteer groups in our community that could use your help.

- McLean County Voice for Choice - 828-3108 or 452-8897 for meeting location. We meet the first and third Tuesday of every month from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- McLean County Peace Coalition - 827-7070 and ask for Debbie or Paula. The Peace Coalition meets the second Wednesday of each month. 5:00 p.m. at Community Action, 923 E. Grove, Bloomington.
- ACLU - 454-7223
- McLean County AIDS Task Force - 827-2438
- Clare House - 828-4035
- Post Amerikan - 828-4473
- Rape Crisis Center - 827-4005
- PATH - 827-4005
- Western Avenue Community Center- 829-4807
- Boys And Girls Club - 829-3034
- Planned Parenthood - 827-4368
- McLean County Humane Society - 663-7387
- Mid-Central Community Action - 829-0691

and foreign visitors about the risks of mutilation. Both Minnesota and North Dakota passed laws this year prohibiting the practice. Similar bills have been introduced in New York and New Jersey.

Representative Schroeder has co-sponsored a bill that would make genital mutilation a crime. The Senate version was incorporated into a foreign operations bill in September, the House version is tied up in committees

Female genital mutilation has become an issue in political asylum cases here. A Nigerian woman in Oregon was allowed to remain in the U.S. last year to protect her two daughters from forced operations in Nigeria. A woman from Sierra Leone was given asylum in Virginia while another was turned down in Maryland, although both said they would face persecution in Sierra Leone because of their opposition to the practice. Fauziya Kasinga, 18, who fled last year from an impending operation in Togo, is not in prison in Pennsylvania, appealing a deportation order after a judge ruled that her asylum request was not credible.

Surita Sandolsham, executive director of Equality Now, a New York based international women's rights group that leads the campaign for action on the issue in the U.S., said that even with immigration guidelines, judges did not seem ready to accept fears of mutilation as a reason to condone the procedure on the ground of tradition for asylum. She said they had ruled that women were not forced to undergo the procedure by governments and so it was not a political matter, or that women had the power to reject such customs. "Is this the message that the U.S. wants to send women fleeing female genital mutilation at great risk to their own lives?" Sandolsham asked. "It is not in keeping with the letter and spirit of refugee law."

UNICEF says that most victims of mutilation are girls between the ages of 4 and 10. The operation performed by a midwife, a member of the family, tribal practitioner or even a doctor - can take a number of forms, but two are most common. In a clitoridectomy, only the clitoris and perhaps part of the vaginal lips are excised. In infibulation, performed in an estimated 15 to 20 percent of cases, the whole outer genital area may be cut off and the surfaces stitched together,

FINALLY A VICTORY

A letter dated December 12, 1995 from the Supreme Court of Illinois (to Attorney General Jim Ryan) states that the members of the Supreme Court have decided "that no additional rules will be promulgated...Further, by order dated December 1, 1995, the Court rescinded the existing Rule 307(a)(8) and 307(e) which was promulgated pursuant to the 1983 Act."

What that means is that the Illinois Supreme Court will not write rules (ever) on the 1995 Parental Notice Law and, it rescinded the existing (as unconstitutional) rules on the 1983 Parental Notice Act.



According to Colleen Conell, ACLU attorney, this move virtually ends any hope by the anti-choice movement that the 1995 Act can ever go into effect. Source: Planned Parenthood.

ANOTHER VICTORY

An appeals judge in Ohio has upheld the ban on implementation of that state's law prohibiting D&X (Partial Birth Abortion Act). In upholding a lower court's ban, the judge found that the state's law was unconstitutional as it interfered with a woman's right to choose. Source: Chicago Tribune

ORPHANAGE STARVATIONS DENIED

The directors of an orphanage have denied that children there had been routinely abused and starved to death in Shanghai, China.

A report by the New York based Human Rights Watch/ Asia said China's state-run orphanages have allowed thousands of unwanted or defective babies to die from medical neglect or starvation.

A physician who once worked for the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute Zhang Shuyun, provided many of the details. She is now in Brussels to brief European Union officials on the issue.

Chinese officials deny the report, alleging that Shuyun is "crazy, abnormal."

The 331 page report alleges workers at the Institute selected orphans for death by deprivation of food and water, a process known as "summary resolution." The report includes photos from the Shanghai orphanage, including one of an emaciated child allegedly in the final stages of being starved to death.

The Human Rights Watch report cites official Chinese statistics as indicating that almost as many children die in orphanages every year as are admitted. Asked to provide mortality rate records for 1988 to 1993 - the years covered by Zhang's allegations about the Shanghai Institute - the Chinese government said none were immediately available. Source: Chicago Tribune



cont.

EGYPT BATTLES FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

The Egyptian government has forbidden state hospitals to perform female circumcisions, just months after authorizing them to do so in an attempt to curb botched operations by amateurs.

State hospitals were quietly told two months ago to stop performing the procedure, but the decision was not announced. A Ministry of health official who confirmed the ban attributed the reversal to pressure from women's and human rights groups and fear of U.S. aid sanctions.

Women's and human rights groups were outraged 14 months ago when the government decided to lift a 1959 ban on performing the procedure in state hospitals. The groups argued that the lifting of the ban implied state sanction.

Hassan al-Kallah, under secretary of health, said another reason the ban was reintroduced was the fear that U.S. aid for Egyptian health projects could be cut off over the controversy.

But the government says opponents of hospital circumcisions ignore a crucial fact: Unlicensed practitioners do the operation anyway and often bungle it. The result, besides the searing pain of the operation, can be weeks of bleeding, infections, and sometimes death. Women can suffer long-term health problems and have difficulty bearing children.

An estimated 70 to 90 percent of Egyptian girls are circumcised just before puberty.

CNN stirred up controversy over female circumcisions in September, 1994 when it aired footage of an amateur cutting away the clitoris of a screaming 10 year old girl in Cairo. Thousands of foreign health experts were in the city for the UN population Conference, and Egyptian officials quickly promised to outlaw the operation. They later backpedaled, arguing that a ban would not stop so widespread a practice. Instead, in October, 1994, the Health Ministry decreed that government hospitals must set aside one day a week for the operation.

Al-Kallah maintained that the decree's opponents failed to realize that in its efforts to halt the

practice, the government is up against deeply rooted tradition.

"People misunderstood us. They thought we were supporting the operation which is not true," Al-Kallah said.

"We are against it, but we could not change the traditions of the society overnight. We were being attacked by people who did not understand Egyptian culture."

Many Egyptians follow the tradition blindly or think the operation will curb a girl's sexual appetite. Others believe it is ordained by Islam, although Muslim scholars are at odds over this. Some Egyptian Christians follow the practice too.

Al-Kallah said that the strongest pressure to reverse the decree came from abroad. He cited attacks on Egypt at September's UN Women's Conference in Beijing. As things stand, doctors willing to perform circumcisions can legally do so. Government hospitals will counsel parents who raise the issue, but it's uncertain how many parents will even approach hospitals that can no longer do the surgery.

As horrifying as it may sound, the idea that circumcisions should be legal and performed by physicians, the idea that a surgical procedure that will be performed whether legal or not, is certainly not entirely foreign to those in the pro-choice movement. While we condemn the practice of female circumcisions, we caution people about judging too harshly the Egyptian government's arguments for their actions. Of course making the procedure illegal is our preference since, unlike the issue of legalized abortion in which the individual makes the decision for herself, female circumcisions is a mutilating procedure performed without the consent of the patient, a child. However, if such customs are so widespread, perhaps the U.S. should be offering to work with the Egyptian government to educate people and work towards changing this particular custom. Source: Chicago Tribune with editorial comments from Voice for Choice

DRUG FOR AIDS EYE DISEASE

An advisory panel to the FDA has recommended approval of a capsule implanted in the eyes of AIDS patients to help them fight off blindness. The committee, by a vote of 6 to 1, agreed that Chiron Vision's Vitrasert implant should be approved for sale. The agency is not bound by advisory committee decisions but usually follows them.

The committee issued a strong warning that AIDS patients should not simply get the implant without additional treatment. The virus that causes the blindness, cytomegalovirus, can also invade other organs and kill AIDS patients because their immune systems cannot fight it off: Cytomegalovirus infections is harmless in most people.

While the virus can invade the entire body, 40% of AIDS patients get cytomegalovirus retinitis, in which the virus spreads inside the eyeball until the patient goes blind. In the 1980's, blindness was inevitable if these patients survived long enough. Now, there are two types of drugs that fight off the blindness, one taken intravenously and the other orally and intravenously. The drugs, ganciclovir and foscarnet, must be taken twice a day for weeks or months, through a catheter that leaves patients open to infection. They also cause numerous, severe side effects. So Chiron invented an implant that allows ganciclovir to seep directly into the retina. In receiving it, patients undergo a 45 minute outpatient eye surgery to stick the capsule behind the retina. It is designed to work for about 8 months.

A study of 173 patients showed the implant prevented progression of their eye infection about three times longer than intravenous ganciclovir, for 220 days as against 72 days. Source: New York Times

FRENCH WOMEN MARCH FOR RIGHTS

Thousands of people marched in Paris last month to support abortion and women's rights they fear are threatened. The broad boulevards of the city center were a sea of singing, dancing demonstrators carrying banners proclaiming "Hands off our right to abortion - it's up women to decide, not the Pope," and, "Our bodies belong to us."

Police said 20,000 people marched from the Place de la Bastille to the Opera, but demonstrators estimate the crowd to be 40,000. Abortion opponents have become active in France in the past few years, chaining themselves inside clinics and confronting women seeking abortions and doctors who perform them.

Abortion has been legal in France, and reimbursed under the state health plan since 1975. But with the rise in anti-choice groups and May's election of a conservative government, many French people now fear such long acquired rights may not last. An interim conservative government in 1993 removed contraceptives from the list of medicines paid for by state health insurance, overturning a 1971 law.

Irene Jouannet, 50, marching with her 24 year old daughter, said she had been active in the women's rights movement in the 1970's but that she and others "had fallen asleep" once the rights they sought were made law. Source: Pantagraph



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Falling Through the Cracks Without Welfare

Her parents were alcoholics. She was abused as a child. At age 19 she began drug and alcohol abuse. Today she's trying to shake her habits, but because of state aid cutbacks, she's falling through the cracks.

Lena Mast applied in 1994 for Social Security disability and is awaiting appeal. She is also sober for the first time in her adult life. She's been diagnosed as manic depressive.

With proper psychiatric drugs Lena gains control. She is denied those drugs now because of welfare reform.

As part of "welfare reform," the Illinois Department of Public Aid (IDPA) no longer supports anyone pending social security disability, including Medicaid. Without Medicaid's financial support, Lena no longer receives the drugs nor counseling.

Lena was born 32 years ago in Bloomington to alcoholic parents. Her father left and her mother had numerous boyfriends. Some of these men sexually abused her, Lena said. At age 12 she was put in a foster home and at 15 sent to the Girl's Home in Quincy.

At age 18 she returned but quickly married a Hannibal, Mo. man to escape her mother. This first husband introduced her to drugs and alcohol. "I never tried drugs or alcohol before I was 19," she said. "Then I got into drinking and drugging really bad." By age 21 she had two daughters, a second husband and was diagnosed with uterine cancer. She had her tubes tied after the second pregnancy.

Lena eventually married three times and had other boyfriends. Some of her husbands were imprisoned for drug activity. "I stayed home and took care of the kids but I used pot all the time," she said.

She was turned in to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for neglecting her children. She also found one of her husbands sexually abusing her-five year old daughter.

She decided to give her children up for adoption. "It was the hardest day of my life. I didn't want help, I wanted to run free and wild and hide the things that happened in my childhood and when they took my kids from my arms."

Lena stopped abusing drugs and sought help. The psychiatric drugs helped her cope without abusing alcohol and counseling was beginning to help her get on her feet.

Then the State of Illinois changed the rules and withdrew support. Lena hangs now in limbo, awaiting Social Security disability.

Bloomington Township gives her \$220 monthly for subsistence and she lives in public housing. Bloomington's John M. Scott Health Resource found short-term help with psychiatric drug withdrawal. Lena no longer receives counseling without state financial aid.

"For the first time in my life I wanted to get better and now they're taking away all these things," she said.

Without the medication Lena said she feels intense depression and has anxiety attacks. Often she is unable to eat or sits with the shades drawn, not bathing for days.

The holidays are the hardest time, she said. Two days before Thanksgiving she admitted herself to BroMenn's emergency room, seeking short term relief with psychiatric drugs.

Local agencies have responded, but no one currently covers those drugs. Township told Lena to reapply to IDPA to get Medicaid again, although she's been twice rejected. Township also said the Center for Human Services has new state funds for individuals in Lena's condition.

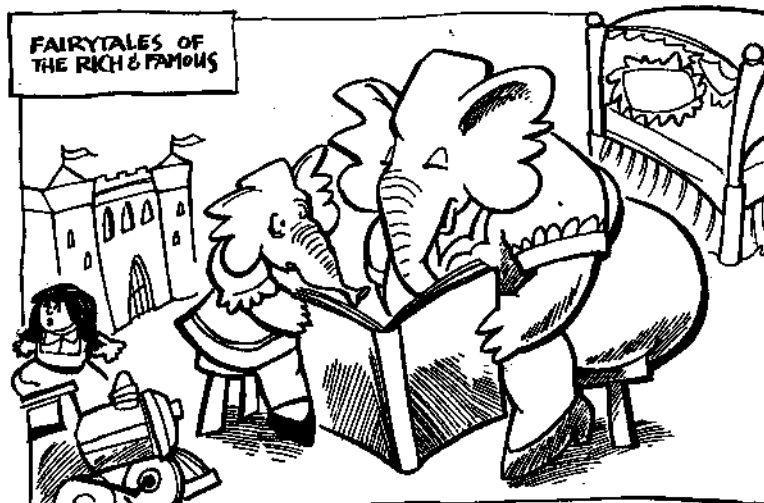
Jack Porter, a Prairie State Legal Services attorney assisting Lena, said her new situation shows "the confusion of the various changes in welfare programs." "If the architects of change enjoy chaos, they're succeeding. If they

seriously want people to enjoy a decent quality of life, they better revisit these changes." Without psychiatric drugs, individuals like Lena will turn to hospitalization and institutionalization, a more expensive means of support, he said.

Lena doesn't want to spend her life on Social Security. She's never held a job for more than three months. "I need time to work on my problems," she said. "I need a few years of counseling and medication so I can learn to stand on my own two feet, so I can be a better person and work an eight-hour job. I want to face reality and get these things out of my head and heart."

--by Mike Matejka

From the Livingston and McLean Counties Union News



"Once upon a time there was a wicked Welfare Queen who had the power to destroy entire economies with one AFDC check..."

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We've Lost the Battle

Three hundred people filled the city council chambers, approximately 80% of them supporting the addition of sexual orientation to the protected groups under the Human Relations Ordinance. Outside twelve Baptists protested. Holding signs with quotes from the Bible (Leviticus, which is also the book of the Bible that instructs menstruating women to run out of the village to the cries of "unclean, unclean") they condemned gays, lesbians and bisexuals. Inside, the majority of people held signs supporting the ordinance.

Reading the agenda for the evening it became clear that something was afoot. Instead of proposing that the council vote for the ordinance as recommended by the Human Relations Commission, the city staff suggested passing the ordinance excluding sexual orientation and source of income.

As seven o'clock approached the council members began to take their seats. With the exception of Mike Matejka, none of them had the courage to look at those in the audience. Then the mayor took his seat. Absent from the Council was Jean Anderson who has been ill: all others were present and accounted for (at least physically). Only Mike Matejka's conscience attended the meeting.

Smartly dressed in his black velvet evening jacket, Jesse convened the inquisition. Instructing the City Council members to "take a deep breath, we're going to start," the meeting was called to order and the roll taken. The city council, bathed, save for one, in the glow of politics and ignorance, would soon pass judgment on gays, lesbians and bisexuals.

When the Council reached agenda item 7A, the comprehensive revisions to the Human Relations Ordinance the hypocrisy began.

First the city attorney, Todd Greenberg, offered his opinions on the ordinance. He stated that the staff disagreed with the inclusion of sexual orientation in the ordinance. Acknowledging that the city has legal authority to include sexual orientation, he stated that the staff felt that it should nonetheless be excluded unless some type of religious exclusion were attached. Greenberg stated that federal law required that, before a group like gays, lesbians and bisexuals can be protected under such an ordinance, there must be a compelling interest on the part of the state to protect the group and that the least restrictive means possible must be pursued in protecting this interest. Finally Greenberg got to the bottom line, the city was afraid that religious groups would take them to court over the ordinance and that the city would have to pay damages and lawyers fees. For most of us in the crowd that night the argument that providing equal rights to gays, lesbians and bisexuals somehow infringed on any one else's right to practice their religion was absurd (even other attorneys disagree with this interpretation).

With that explanation out of the way, Councilman Bitter moved that the ordinance be approved with the exclusion of sexual orientation and source of income. The mayor called for a second, silence, he called for a second again, finally, after the third call for a second, Judy "flip" Markowitz seconded Bitter's motion. To make her second even more aggravating, procedural rules state that if after three calls for a second there is none, the motion dies and a new motion maybe made. After the third call Councilman Matejka began to reach for his microphone to make a new motion, Markowitz suddenly made the second.

Once the motion had been seconded, the mayor recommended that the council suspend its rules to allow additional public testimony on the issue. He stated that he felt 10 minutes should be given to each side to present arguments for and against the inclusion of sexual orientation in the ordinance. Councilman Sprague moved to suspend the rules to allow for the additional testimony and Councilman Matejka seconded the motion. The motion carried and the mayor read the names of six individuals, three on each side of the issue.

First, supporting the inclusion of sexual orientation in the ordinance was Human Relations Commissioner Marc Miller.

Miller stated that the commission had worked on this ordinance for over two years and that tolerance of diversity is the reason for the ordinance. Miller reminded the crowd that there was a time when our community allowed discrimination against other groups now protected. Tolerance for different thoughts and behaviors lead to the enactment of the original ordinance.

Next Jerry Pope, a member of the Human Rights Advocacy Committee spoke. He reminded the council that often times in our country's past we have discovered our beliefs were wrong. Our government has a right to protect and educate. Pope stated that advocating for human rights is not radical.

Peggy Burton, also a member of the Human Rights Advocacy Committee, was quite eloquent in her appeal to the council. People want peace, she said, they want the violence to end; this is our time to create peace. Burton stated that the commission was taking the first steps to protect all citizens and that the process of approving the ordinance had revealed the prejudice in our community. Burton told the council that prejudice encourages people to see others as less important, but we are not less important. We are just as important, and we are here, we are one, we are your neighbors, your coworkers, we attend church with you. Civil rights is not a popularity contest, if we had to wait for the majority to support equal rights for any group, no group would be protected. Burton ended her remarks stating that prejudice had been dividing the city and that civil rights is the medicine that begins to heal the wounds of prejudice. She urged the council to take a step toward healing.

Speaking against the inclusion of sexual orientation in the ordinance was Jesse Parker, former City councilman, and Scott Shafer. Christian Coalition Director David Curtin was also slated to speak but Mr. Parker and Mr. Shafer rambled on so long that the ten minutes was gone. To his credit the mayor cut off the debate at the allotted time.

Mr. Parker first wowed the audience with his version of life in Bloomington. Stating "I don't believe that the prejudice exists that been portrayed here." He claimed that all sorts of groups were chipping away at our laws in an effort to get away from any kind of morality. Parker stated that our country was formed on Biblical principles (funny, I thought it was initially formed on Native American principles and then taken over by us on the principles of greed and bigotry. Just goes to show you how many different perceptions there are of any given story).

Parker began quoting Moses from the Book of Leviticus. He then felt compelled, for reasons still unknown, to cite the Illinois Revised Statute that prohibits bestiality. I don't do justice here to Jesse's barely coherent ramblings but hey, why bother, the guy is an idiot. Essentially Parker believes that gays, lesbians and bisexuals are sick, perverted, twisted, worse than criminals and that if we have equal rights, he, Parker, would be forced to honor something he disapproves of. His conclusion seems something akin to my saying that we should not protect Republicans because to do so forces me to honor principles and practices generally disapprove of. Hmmm, maybe its worth pursuing.

Scott Shafer, the annoying little attorney who lives at 3208 Suffolk Way, Bloomington, stated that he personally bears no ill will against those pushing this amendment. Shafer also states that our government should not provide special rights based on behavior or put its stamp of approval on the behavior. Initially arguing under the pretense of law (that we all have the same rights although I bet he and his wife have never been thrown out of a restaurant for holding hands), Shafer quickly moved to his religious beliefs that homosexuality is a chosen behavior and gays can leave it so therefore are unworthy of protection. Even if it were chosen behavior, why would we not protect homosexuality when we protect religion which is also a chosen behavior and belief system.

Evidence that there is a God came when the mayor cut Shafer off because the time had run out. At that point the council came back into session.

Councilman Fruin asked a question of Todd Greenberg; he wanted to know if any of the other communities that had added sexual orientation to their ordinances (Cook County, Chicago, Berwyn, Evanston, Oak Park, Champaign and Urbana) had rescinded the ordinances afterwards. Greenberg stated that as far as he knew, no, none of those communities



But Not the War

had rescinded their ordinances.

Councilman Matejka moved that the city pass the ordinance as recommended by the Human Relations Commission (including sexual orientation). Matejka reminded the council that the last time Bloomington was in the national news over a civil rights issue was in 1965 when the Bloomington Police Dept. arrested NAACP leader Merlin Kennedy for wearing a Santa suit in the Christmas parade (apparently it was illegal for Santa to be African American). Matejka stated that the council had a chance to show that we are a caring, compassionate community.

No one seconded Matejka's motion.

At that point Judy "flip" Markowitz felt compelled to weasel her way out of supporting what she had originally said she supported. Markowitz had the audacity to claim that no business or community leaders had come forth to support the ordinance. We would like to know who she considers community leaders. At the Martin Luther King Awards Luncheon Markowitz was approached by numerous individuals who all spoke in support of including sexual orientation. Topping the list of those talking with her at the luncheon: Carol Reitan, Linda Ash and Luellen Laurenti. In addition, Justice James Knecht stated support for the ordinance (including sexual orientation) when he accepted his Martin Luther King Award. Apparently Markowitz does not consider Mike Matejka or the Human Relations Commissioners to be community leaders either, though their work on this issue demonstrated vision, courage and leadership Markowitz will never have. In stating that no business leaders supported the ordinance she demonstrated her irresponsibility. If Markowitz (or any other council member for that matter) had either attended the public hearings or read the transcripts from those hearings, she would have known that numerous business leaders and owners did publicly support the ordinance.

Markowitz claimed that she opposed the ordinance based on her belief that it was unwanted government intrusion. How ironic that she is protected in her religious beliefs and practices because of the same kind of government intrusion. Then she tried to argue that her constituents were against the ordinance. In private meetings with Human Rights Advocacy Committee members she stated that she couldn't support the inclusion of sexual orientation because she wanted to run for mayor. Well Judy, it's a toss up between you and Jesse. At least we know where Jesse stands, you blow with the wind.

In essence what Markowitz was saying was this: show me that I can do this and still get reelected because you, as individuals, are not important enough for me to worry about. My reelection is more important than your civil rights. If you must be discriminated against in order for me to protect my political future, so be it.

Also inexcusable for his failure to support civil rights was councilman and Democratic party member Tom Whalen. Speaking as one who helped Tom pass out his campaign literature last time around, if there's anybody out there wanting to challenge him next year, please let me know, I may have some time to help you out next time around. Whalen has demonstrated that he is not capable of putting civil rights and the protection of all citizens in front of his own religious beliefs and personal political goals. Sorry Tom, I can't support you anymore, I thought you had a conscience.

As the council members voted, only Mike Matejka put politics aside, voting against the ordinance as proposed in the meeting agenda (remember, as worded in the agenda, the ordinance excluded sexual orientation and source of income).

As the supporters of the original ordinance left the room, they began to sing We Shall Overcome. We shall too, it will take time, and will take an effort by the gay, lesbian and bisexual community to work with other groups, to reach out, to recognize that anyone's struggle for human rights is also our struggle and unless we are willing to help in the struggle of others, we have no right to ask others to help us. For too long we have been quiet, invisible and egocentric. It's time we became loud, visible, and an active ally in the overall fight for civil rights.

-Linda Ketchum

A Biased & Utterly Bigoted Sidesteppin' Civil Rights Report:

The night of the Bloomington City Council's meeting to vote on the proposed amendment to its human rights regulations, and I'm still undecided about whether I want to attend or not.

The rule, which includes giving legal protection to gay and bisexual men and women, has been the topic of loud debate over the past few months. Hardly a day has gone by without at least one letter in the *Pantagraph* on the subject. Like abortion, gay rights is an issue that clearly brings out a lot of passion in people. Judy Markowitz to the contrary, there are few "moderates" in this issue.

Personally, I've found it a topic that tries my own tolerance. I'm sick of the hypocrisy of so-called Christians and their duo-mouthed treatment of the issue. If every Christian who professed to do so truly "hated the sin and not the sinner," they wouldn't be so opposed to the validation of basic human rights. Even a sinner needs a place to live, after all. No, the core issue here is a desire to punish those whom fundamentalist Christians see as unworthy of their "forgiving love"--punish them in the job and housing markets.

If this seems a bit presumptuous--jumping the gun on the judgment biz--well, the history of Christianity is full of such presumptions. As someone who was raised a trad Christian and ultimately discarded it out of impatience with the arrogant assumption that any one human-made religion is the "true faith," I'm weary to

the point of irritation at the sight of these hypocritical oafs. Do I really want to spend my time listening to an officious git like former councilman Jesse Parker as he babbles incoherently about bestiality? Can I stomach the sight of so many Christian Coalition yahoos in one room?

Besides, isn't the result a foregone conclusion? Both mayor Jesse Smart and councilman George "Hey, a nice gay fella lives across the alley from me" Kroutil have already publicly trashed the ordinance. The city staff, fearful of boldly going where only a few have gone before, has already recommended that the council stick its head in the sand. What's the point?

My inner voice answers: to show support--and to watch the City Council squirm. This combo of high and low motives gets me off the living room couch, over to the city hall and in the front row alongside my wife. If things get too boring, I can always watch Jesse Smart twitch.

We arrive early, and the joint is already packed with supporters on both sides and media reps of all stripes. We chat with a photog from the *Windy City Times*, who has driven down with a reporter from the city to cover this story. At one point, he asks us to point out George Kroutil's seat.

"Hear he falls asleep during the meetings," he says, with an eye for the apt pic. "He probably won't tonight," we say, considering the amount of publicity of George



cont.

has received around this story. The guy's even been quoted by the *New York Times*, cementing Central Illinois' image as hickland in the eastern press with his comment about that "fella across the alley." George'll probably be pinching himself all night to keep from nodding off.

Turns out, the ordinance is the second item discussed: clearly, the council wants to get this over as quickly as possible—if only because of the potential fire risk that all these bodies pose. They open with a staff report by legal counsel Todd Greenburg, the gist of which is a "policy recommendation" that the provisos around sexual orientation and lawful source of income be yanked from the wording. Legally, city staff claim to be wary of legislation that has limited precedence: at issue is the question of whether this reg wouldn't severely limit the rights of those with "sincere religious beliefs."

A scary defense that, particularly given the hate crime contingent's predilection for citing "sincere religious belief" as a justification for bombing women's clinics and government buildings. Isn't there a point where simple justice takes precedence over the individual's right to be a bigot?

That's a word that the Christian Coalitionists don't like hearing thrown around: bigot. Bigot. Bigot. Bigot. You know: "someone intolerant of others." Call someone a bigot in these label sensitive times, and you're sure to get their backs up. Yet if folks could be tolerant, would we even have this controversy?

Next up: a series of statements pro and con from members of the community. Each side gets ten minutes and three spokesfolk to fill them. On the plus side is Mark Miller from the Human Relations Commission, plus two articulate community representatives, Jerry Pope and Peggy Burton. On the negative side are Jesse Parker and Christian Coalition member Scott Shaffer (a third presenter, the Illinois CC's executive director, is squeezed out of the time frame).

Of the two, Parker immediately comes across as both pathetic and incohesive, pulling from Leviticus, rambling about bestiality (seeming to find it contradictory that while bestiality is illegal in this state, sexual relationships between two consenting adults are not), losing his place in his notes. Shaffer is smoother and more dangerous, couching his bile in the same legalities that Todd Greenburg has used. But when stripped of its debate squad trappings, the basic line remains the same: a human rights ordinance sanctions behavior that the CC finds abhorrent, as if the admission that gays and bisexuals have rights like everybody else implies an endorsement of everything they do.

This patently bogus reasoning harkens back to the punitive Puritan model that would also, for example, take away all prisoners' rights because to treat them like people is more than they deserve. No civil rights law endorses everything we do, and to act as if it does is to engage in base sophistry and scaremongering.

Once our twenty minutes of public discourse have ended, it's up to the city council to discuss this issue. This is the part that most of us have come to see, since only a few of these august representatives have spoken their thoughts in public yet.

Of those members who actually do open up, only councilman Mike Matejka is willing to endorse the full ordinance. "This issue will not go away," he says, noting that Bloomington has a rare opportunity to be on the cutting edge of tolerance. Last time we made the national news for civil rights, he adds, was in the mid-sixties when police "detained" a black male for dressing like Santa Claus in a Christmas parade. Not a stellar moment in B-N history.

More depressing are the statements of councilwoman Judy Markowitz, who states that she's received opposition to the ordinance from a vague majority of "moderate" citizens. Early on, Ms. M. came out in favor of the reg, but to vote in favor of it now, she states, would be to "lose the trust of my constituents." And get in the way of her mayoral ambitions perhaps? To some members of her constituency in the audience, though, this statement is one of the night's big betrayals.

Somewhat more sympathetic is councilman Mike Sprague. While he ultimately will vote against the amendment, at least he manages to give the impression that he has honestly thought and agonized about it. I'm more willing to cut him some slack than I am former mayor Wally Bittner, who offers the initial motion to strike references to "sexual orientation and lawful source of income" from the amendment with all the matter-of-fact expedience of the lifetime politician.

When the final vote comes down, the tally is: six council members in favor of the truncated ordinance; one (Matejka) opposed.

"Let the healing process begin," Mayor Smart concludes just before the voting. "If you ignore something long enough, maybe it'll go away," I translate. But human rights is an idea that won't be so easily banished.

We all shuttle out of the building to let the council finish the rest of its work night. Outside the city building stands a row of fundamentalist protesters, ranging in age from preschool to grandparent, carrying signs like this choice quote from Leviticus that Jesse

Parker also gave us inside: "If a male lies with a male, their blood shall be upon them." This is sweet, I think; the family that threatens violence together, stays together.

And today, thank God, their religious rights have been preserved.


--billsher

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The State of Things in Bloomington-Normal

It's okay to discriminate in Bloomington. Hate crimes are okay. Prejudice is acceptable. Intolerance is fine. Being "different" is wrong. Not fitting into the mainstream, middle class, Christian contingent makes you undesirable. That is the message our city officials voted to send out into the world. And yes, the world, or at least the nation, was watching. Once again this community has banded together to promote ignorance and bigotry. Is this truly the message we want to send?

Many members of the mainstream media called this measure a "gay rights" ordinance. It is not. It is a human rights ordinance. Gay people are just that: people. That word is still synonymous with human. The ordinance just spelled things out a little more clearly so those folks with narrow minds (and little or no imagination) would be less confused about the definition of "human rights." Obviously, the narrow minds worked overtime again.

To the narrow minds the terms gay, homosexual, lesbian and bisexual equal the term pervert. A careful inspection of a very large Webster's Third Edition Dictionary leads to the discovery that none of those terms are included in the definition of pervert. Hmm. Maybe a little more education is in order. Homosexuality is often thought of as an "orientation." The psychiatric definition of orientation involves awareness of a situation in regards to time, space and the identity of a person. Left-handedness is an orientation. An orientation is a neutral trait, something to which a person is presupposed. It is not a choice. Who among left-handed people choose to be that way? These things are not changeable. Well, perhaps they can be changed, but not without harming the individual in some form. Remember the stigma of being left-handed? Remember the pain and



the anger and the difficulty of adults forcing you to use your "right" hand? (Yes, the double meaning definitely is intended.) Consider the same for homosexuality. It is not a choice. Yes, this comparison may seem very simplistic, but narrow minds require simple information to be able to process it.

Why are narrow minded people so determined to force their views on everyone? Is it that necessary to be right? Is their ego so great they are incapable of seeing any point of view but their own? Many say it is in the name of God. Is it God or is it their interpretation of God? Many non-Christian religions accept homosexuality. Many other cultures accept homosexuality. By the view of these narrow minded, self-righteous, so called Christians, these peoples with their culture and beliefs are wrong and evil. No. Live and let live. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. As long as it harms none, do what you will.

The Bloomington council did more than vote down the human rights ordinance. They also voted down the source of income provision. They did this based on the reasoning that no state or federal provisions exist on this matter. Well, move over racial prejudice. Move over sexual prejudice. Move over religious prejudice. Here comes income prejudice. This one got very little mention during the debates and letter writing campaign. One attendee at the earlier public hearings, a realtor, stated they (his real estate firm) would not rent apartments to temporary employees. No one jumped at that one, but maybe it requires closer examination. After some more in-depth analysis, some might discover this issue to be a bit more important than it seems and the issue may hit very close to home.

How many members of this community work as temporaries at Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing (hoping to get hired on)? How many are employed, on a regular basis, through the prolific number of temp agencies locally? The seasonal staff at Owens' Nurseries are temporary employees. How many people realize that a large percent of the part-time, non-faculty support staff at Heartland Community College are considered temporary employees? Incidentally, by the truest definition of the term temporary employee, politicians fit in that category as well. All of you mentioned above are not eligible to rent an apartment from that realty company! Has this statement hit home yet? You can't have a place to live because someone can discriminate against how you make your living. It's legal. Consider artisans and crafters; can their source of income pass scrutiny? There is no ordinance to protect your source of income from someone else's definition of what is acceptable.

Then there is the family status issue. Yes, they did pass this one. But this provision does not go far enough. It does not take into consideration something that is becoming far more common in today's society--the extended family. It is not uncommon for three or four generations to live together in the same household in these times. Senior members often find the only feasible solution is to move in with their adult children. Grown children are returning home, or not leaving at all, and raising their children under their parents' roof. Unrelated adults are forming bonds almost like siblings and sharing homes and child care. Same sex couples are living together. Newsflash--only until someone decides it's not okay with them. If you

do not own your own home, don't count on this being a reality. In some cases, owning your own home is no guarantee.

People who own their own mobile or modular homes and moor these homes in courts owned by James Moore of California (Hilltop, Alexander Estates, Mobiland, Northmeadow Village) cannot, by court rules, have anyone residing in their homes who is not an "immediate family member" defined as legal or blood relative. So you and your live-in mate have been living your trailer together for a couple of years. Then new court management comes in (a frequent occurrence) and decides to enforce the rules to the letter of the law. Now where are you? You have no legal recourse. The obvious choices are not very desirable. Many apartment leases read the same way. Often these rules are not enforced, but you should remember...they can be.

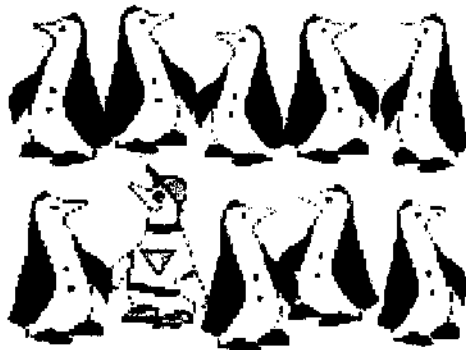
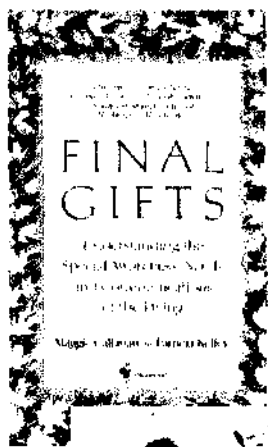
So the Gay Rights Ordinance lost...oh well. No, people, all of us lost. How badly we lost, well, that remains to be seen.

--Winter Wren, High Priestess of the Temple of the Sacred Lady of Avalon, is a professional intuitive arts counselor, certified Tarot Master and certified hypnotherapist. She may be reached at : (309) 888-4689

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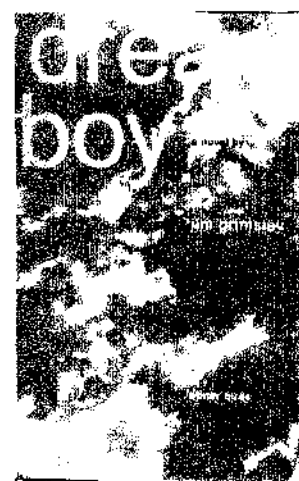


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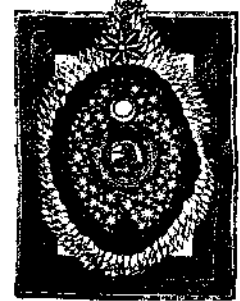
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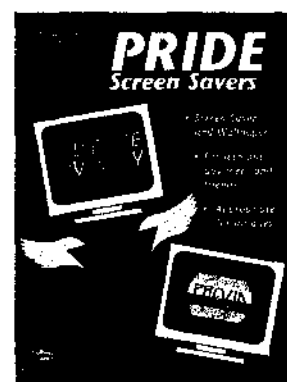
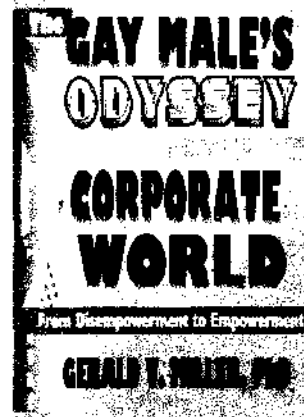
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The Morning After

We approached Mike Matejka, alderman and Bloomington City Council member, and Melissa McGrath, a local attorney and a Human Rights Commissioner, to ask them what they thought of the Bloomington City Council's rejection of "Sexual Orientation as Added Protection" section in the proposed revision of the Human Rights Ordinance. Mr Matejka was the only person who voted for adoption of the new ordinance in its entirety. Ms. McGrath helped draft the new ordinance.

Mike Matejka

"Overall, even though the ordinance was defeated, the [fight for its adoption] has been a positive experience, because it's the first time the community has had to come to terms and deal with its diversity. I don't think the issue is dead."

"The challenge is for people to continue to raise the issue, and not be afraid to speak out when there is discrimination, so we can build a case for the ordinance passage. As for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, I think the City Attorney's and City Manager's argument was very weak. As time passes, there will be more case law, which will give us an opportunity to truly define what the law does and does not cover."

"I think the Council Members were confused and that the city attorney's legal argument gave them an excuse not to vote for [the ordinance]."

"I want to personally commend all the people who took the risk of speaking out for the ordinance. I don't believe their efforts were in vain."

Melissa McGrath

"The Human Rights Commission's role is to respond to what the community brings to it. People need to communicate the need for protection. Community members continue to bring complaints of discrimination before the Commission. The Human Rights Ordinance needs to go up before the City Council again. It's far from a dead issue."

"The Commissions' role is to ensure proper enforcement of the discrimination ordinance, and at the present, to recommend suggestions to the City Staff that should be added to the ordinance based on community need, etc."

"The Community meetings over the past year and a half were never prefaced by a belief that we were to look only to ensure the local ordinance was consistent with state and federal law. If that were the case, the city could surely rely on Todd Greenburg, City Attorney, to ensure this type of consistency."

--Dr. Attitude

The HRC's response to the City Staff's citation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

2. Religious Restoration Act unrelated to suggested revisions--or--related to entire ordinance

The religious Freedom restoration Act of 1993 states "[g]overnment shall not substantially burden a person's exercise of religion. . . "(42 USC sec 2000bb et seq. (1993))

If the federal law relied on by city staff precludes the addition of provisions related to sexual orientation or the perceived sexual orientation or the perceived sexual orientation of local persons, it also defeats other protections already provided by the ordinance. *Anyone can claim as a defense to any discriminatory act that to restrict their behavior toward another person substantially restricts their exercise of religion.* The staff report concedes as much by stating "as a practical matter a religious belief is whatever a person says." For example, a person charged with sexual harassment could claim it is their religious belief that women are inferior; thereby precluding a prosecution under the ordinance. A person could claim their religious dogma anticipates a separatist society; thereby precluding a prosecution for racial discrimination.

The above represent just a few areas where one could claim any religious belief for their discriminatory acts. Clearly the federal government did not intend for this act to preclude cities from protecting [their] citizenry from discrimination. The staff report claims other protections provided by the local ordinance clearly present a compelling reason for providing protections; whereas protections

based on sexual orientation are not compelling. The staff report has neglected to direct you [the Bloomington City Council] to a recent observation made by the United States Supreme Court.

In Hurley v. Irish-American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual group of Boston, 115 S. Ct. 2338, 2446, the court observed that laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation "are well within the State's usual power to enact when a legislature has reason to believe that a given group is the target of discrimination." It is within the City Council's legitimate authority to add sexual orientation or the perception of one's sexual orientation, to the local anti-discrimination ordinance to protect local citizens from such discriminatory acts.

The staff finally relies on the following observation: "no studies exist, to my knowledge, which prove that homosexuals or bisexuals experience a substantial disadvantage in finding or keeping employment or housing when compared to heterosexuals." *The staff report ignores national state and local media reports of violent actions based on a person's sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.* Most important, this observation wholly ignores the testimonies presented at public hearings here recently. People testified they had been discriminated against at a local level because of their sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation. Testimony also included remarks indicating all homosexuals should be taken to a secluded area and disposed of. Testimony at the public hearings clearly demonstrated the form of discrimination now included in the revised ordinance is a needed protection for a significant segment of our local community.

If the problem of discrimination based on sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation is important to the City of Bloomington, the ordinance should be passed with the inclusion of the sexual orientation protections absent any religious exclusion--which the HRC concluded would represent supporting certain religious dogmas contrary to others or to secular beliefs held by many local citizen[s].

As noted by the staff report, homosexuality is not a criminal act. There is no reason to provide less protections to persons discriminated against merely because certain religious dogmas express moral judgments toward others based on their sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.

Moreover, in no way do the suggested additions to the Human relations ordinance substantially interfere with one's exercise [one's] religion. The ordinance in no way tells [people] how they should live their lives. If [people do] not agree with another person's lifestyle, [one] merely must ensure they do not discriminate against that person with whom they disagree. They need not live with those persons, nor befriend those persons. They must, merely, abide by reasonable limitations placed upon them as individuals who chose to enter the commercial area and who benefit financially from those with whom they do business.

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Notes From The Land Of Anti-Fat

JESSE IN THE LAND OF ANTI-FAT

In the midst of the community's current debate over a proposed gay rights city ordinance, Bloomington mayor Jesse Smart—along with councilman George Kroutil—have recently taken to trotting out a "ludicrous example" as a means of countering arguments in favor of the ordinance.

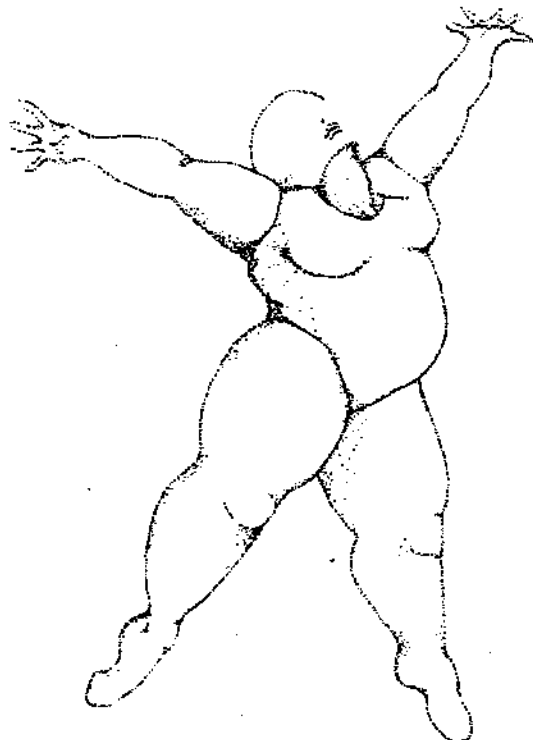
"What's next?" Hizzoner has been heard to ask more than one proponent, "a law guaranteeing rights to fat people?"

We'll ignore the unfortunate implication that Herr Smart is unfamiliar with this column. Over the past two years, we've repeatedly cataloged instances of size discrimination, some of it individualized (e.g., the auto parts salesman who was fired for being "too fat"), some of it broader and more culturally based (the repeated instances of media-supported fat slams). Whatever your view of legalized attempts to discourage bigotry, it's clear that size-based prejudice is pervasive.

Bigotry is not always easy to pin down, particularly with the modern day bigot's tendency to couch their hatred and discomfort in Christian terms of love and acceptance. All we have to look at is individual anecdotal experience and statistical data. For the latter, we have a survey of Scandinavian counties that showed fat males earning substantially lower salaries than thin peers in the same positions. Because the fat worker was perceived to be slower—or less of a self starter—or just plain stupid—their value in the job market is lower.

This cultural bias has even been acknowledged in a 1995 Jenny Craig diet commercial: motivated young mid-sized Black woman on graduating from college realizes that the only way she can sell herself to potential employees is to lose weight. This, she does, and as the year progresses, we discover she indeed gets a job. At Jenny Craig.

Talking with individual fat men and women,



the picture becomes even clearer. While fat men and women do not have the history of violent victimization that has characterized gay bashing (though we might wonder about those instances of spousal abuse that were "justified" by a wife's weight gain), the amount of verbal/psychological abuse is comparable. Because fatness—like gayness—is considered by many to be a matter of choice and a measure of moral character, it's fair game for the holier-than-thou.

Interview members of NAAFA (National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance) on the subject, and you'll also hear repeated stories of job discrimination based on size. The local nursery owner who refused to hire a fat woman because the job entailed lifting. The university library supervisor who discouraged a fat applicant because fat workers supposedly take too many sick days. The office manager who sent away the superior fat applicant because they didn't want a fat receptionist to be the first thing visitors saw. The litany goes on and on.

Yeah, we know: life's unfair. But that doesn't mean anyone should countenance flat-out pig-ignorant bigotry. Particularly when it comes out the condescending mouth of Jesse Smart, belittler of fat rights.

Jesse: who a couple years back added his bit to Diet Culture by publicly undergoing a weight loss regimen that got more media coverage (thanx to Bill Flick) than most of his actions in office. Whenever I see a public figure make a big to-do about their weight loss, I'm reminded of Oprah Winfrey, who repeatedly has stated in public that the greatest achievement of her life has been to lose weight.

Think of it. Here's this intelligent, talented woman, a media power whose greatest yardstick of self-worth is her size. Community works, social relationships, spiritual growth—all pale in comparison to her physical diminution. Isn't something just the slightest bit off-balance here?

For many fat and thin Americans, Diet Culture can be Death Culture. This can be found in the anorectic's belief that even a starvation body is "too fat." And in the victims of stomach

stapling and other radical weight loss surgeries who found the cure to be fatally worse than the "disease." And in the presently undiagnosed millions who have added additional stress to their cardio-vascular systems with extensive very low calorie diets. And in the countless fat patients whose real ailments have gone untreated because all their physician can see to do is prescribe a diet.

Sure, Jesse, fat rights is just an absurd idea. And waving the idea around as a tool to banish the specter of gay rights is a canny political move. But what if all the fat voters in Bloomington remember how much you tried to downplay all the negative experiences of their lives?

Maybe this fat rights thing ain't such a dopey idea, after all. . .

billsher

NOTES...

Let's note with interest the recent death of pool conflict on his exact age, which could have been up to 92). No such thing as a long-lived fat man?

Let's also note the coming of "fitness expert" Richard Simmons to Joliet's Rialto Square Theatre, an event with a ticket cost of \$16.50 - Jimmy Swaggart?

This note from Marilyn Wann, in the recent issue of her excellent activist mag FAT!SO?: "Last Spring, I attended this really amazing conference of nutritionists and therapists and nurses and dietitians who are anti-dieting. The group is AHELP, the Association for the Health Enrichment of Large Persons.

"They presented cool new research questioning the idea that fat is unhealthy. They also talked a lot about food. In their practices, they see lots of people who have eating disorders or a history of dieting. But they know that not everyone with food issues is fat, and they know that not all fat people have problems with food.

"So there I was, a fat activist who has never dieted or had an eating disorder.

"I found the professional jargon fascinating. I was especially interested in the terms 'mouth hunger' and 'stomach hunger.' Different authorities had different definitions. During a Q&A, I said that these two terms for hunger reminded me of the time when Freud believed there were two kinds of female orgasms. True orgasms were vaginal. (Those were the good kind.) Clitoral O's weren't real orgasms.

"My comment got a big laugh, and the conference broke for lunch."

bs

(Sample copies of FAT!SO? can be purchased for \$3.50 from P.O. Box 423464, San Francisco, CA 94142.)



Animal Magnetism



The Truth Behind "Taming the Tiger"

British-born David McMillan owns and runs an "exotic animal" training school in Florida. His students pay nearly \$3,000 for the eight-month day school, hoping for careers in circuses and zoos. What they find is suffering and sadness, food deprivation, thirst and fear.

Please help them!

The call came into PETA's Maryland office on a hot July day. Lions, tigers, leopards and other big cats are being abused, the whistleblower said, at Tiger's Eye Productions in Oviedo, Fla. The caller sounded so desperate that a PETA undercover investigator was sent south to enroll at the "school." During the next eight months, he witnessed what he believes were more than 100 violations of animal protection laws, documented in dozens of hours of videotape, dozens of photographs and detailed log notes.

The evidence is shocking:

- cats beaten with axe handles, chains, plastic pipes and fists;
- tigers starved for days to make them "cooperate" in "training";
- animals caged outside in searing 95-degree heat without shelter or water;
- animals transported in open trucks without protection from raging thunderstorms or exhaust fumes;
- sick animals denied veterinary care.

- animals transported in open trucks without protection from raging thunderstorms or exhaust fumes;
- sick animals denied veterinary care.

Our investigator also came to know each of the animals as individuals. Pancho, a black-maned African lion. Videotape caught McMillan ramming an axe handle down his throat. Samson, a white Bengal tiger, was kicked in the head and hit between the eyes with a wooden shovel handle. Romeo, an Asian leopard kitten, was let out of a tiny transport carrier only twice in a month. Cinnamon, a Florida panther, was crammed with two leopards for more than two days into a transport cage designed for one. Dimitri, a royal Bengal tiger, was beaten on his back and hips over and over again with a hard plastic pipe.

There are no holidays or graduation celebrations for these sensitive animals and the other big cats at the "school"--Aesha, Magic, Angel, Sasha, Bronson and Toni. When they aren't being stricken by McMillan and his students or sitting in their cement and steel prisons, they are forced into carriers and carted like so much luggage to shopping mall, nightclubs, and gas stations to put on cheap sideshows. McMillan, who learned his trade in the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey-owned Circus World and claims to have been tutored by infamous Ringling "trainer" Gunther Gebel-Williams, spends little time teaching.

But his students quickly learn that intimidation and physical force will frighten animals into "performing." Sadly, McMillan's methods are not unusual in the world of animal training. Says captive animal expert William Johnson. "[T]he whips, muzzles, chains, electric prods, and other tools used in the circus are constant reminders that these animals are being forced to perform for their human audience."

Fortunately, there is hope for Pancho, Sampson and the other animals who suffer at McMillan's hands. PETA has filed a formal complaint with the U.S. government and is demanding that McMillan's license to exhibit "exotic" animals be revoked.

If you would like to see Tiger's Eye lose its licenses, tell that to:

1. Richard Watkins, Sector Supervisor, U.S. Department of Agriculture at 813-225-7690 (fax 813-225-7032)
2. Dr. Alan Egbert, Executive Director, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission at 904-488-2975 (fax 904-488-6988).

✓ Protest circuses and traveling animal shows that come to your town. Use our handy list (included below) to check for hidden abuse.

✓ Write to organizations like the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs that often sponsor circuses. Ask them not to bring animal cruelty to your town.

Big Lie Under the Big Top

Trainers seldom beat animals publicly. The shock prods and blackjacks are usually saved for private sessions. But whips and bullhooks are routinely used to "control" animals in the ring. There are other signs that animals are abused--if you know what to look for. Take this checklist with you next time the circus comes to town. Ask patrons not to attend, but, if they do, to use the following list and send it to PETA. (Write to PETA for multiple copies to hand out.) PETA; P.O. Box 42516, Washington, D.C., 20015

Signs of Abuse:

- ✓ Bullhooks or whips. How many times were they used to strike or jab animals?
- ✓ Muzzles or chains. Were they used?
- ✓ Missing hair can be a sign of malnutrition or self-mutilation.
- ✓ Scars can be evidence of beatings or burns.
- ✓ Underweight animals may be starved or ill.
- ✓ Behavioral signs such as continuous pacing or swaying from side to side.
- ✓ Cowering.
- ✓ Growling
- ✓ Head-bobbing
- ✓ Paw blisters

Source: PETA's Animal Times
Holiday 1995



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The World According to Matt

Empirical Cycles

The Roman Empire, perhaps the most powerful Empire in history, eventually fell. Most historians attribute this to growing physically too big. By conquering Europe, parts of Africa and the Near East, they couldn't possibly defend all of their borders. This, coupled with internal dissent, collapsed the Great Empire. As everything moves in cycles and the past repeats itself, today's great empire is falling faster because of the same reasons. That empire is the USA.

The United States has essentially colonized the globe. We have done this not so much with military might (this is merely an enforcer) as with economics. If another nation defies us, we can cripple them with sanctions and embargoes, or financially hurt them with trade status and restrictions. By offering economic aid, we let countries choose between democracy/capitalism or starving citizens. By restricting and creating high priced technologies, we keep countries we don't agree with or who can't afford to keep up in a kind of international caste system. At the bottom is the Third World, followed by the middle class (our allies). At the top are countries such as Japan who can cause us economic harm. Above all are Americans (er...wealthy Americans).

Like Rome, we are being slowly pulled down (actually, very fast compared to Rome...). Our assets are constantly being threatened (oil in the Middle East is a perfect example), and American jobs are always on the line. With weapon-grade nuclear components floating around everywhere, small bands of "barbarians" (eg: Third World governments and terrorists) are suddenly a real threat. Our stability is also threatened by shifting

of mass media and the economic caste system, only an infamously wealthy individual (or one with mega-corporate support) can be a realistic candidate. You have to pay for advertising, take time of work to travel and campaign, and pay bribes. Face it, if you can't afford a business suit, you'll never be elected to any office.

The main cause of this democratic crisis is capitalism. If you have money, you have a voice. Big-buck special interests sway legislature both on the big and small scales (don't think that insurance companies didn't have something to do with seat belt laws and child safety lighters), and the show is run by the social elite (the end result of capitalism). As long as the gulf between the few lavishly rich and the destitute multitude grows, the common people will be excluded from government more and more, and the ruling class will use economics to keep it that way.

Now is the time to wake up and fully utilize all of our choices. If someone asks you whether you'd like a Ford or a Suzuki, you can still opt to walk. Similarly, if you are given the choice of Republican, Democrat, or Other, you can choose not to vote. Sure, well meaning popular propaganda scolds those who don't vote, calling them apathetic, lazy, or uninformed. They say that it is wrong to not utilize your rights, that individuals make a difference, and that by voting you can take an active role in your government. Unfortunately, popular propaganda (even well-meaning) is both the victim and fuel of the illusion of choice. Not voting is a choice. It is a measurable percentage, just like each candidates', and it shows two things. One, that many people either don't care, or don't feel like an important element of the process. Second, it can also show that people can see through the insulting charade that American Democracy has become.

By example, others too may be given the gift of sight and reject the illusion of choice, and take the power to catalyze some real change in how our government is run.

In other nations around the world, we have imposed both capitalism and democracy. Unlike us, they vote on a system, not just a leader. Most of them have swiftly become destitute by capitalism, and many are electing to return to different economic systems. Here, in the land of the free, we aren't allowed to do this.

Believing in and participating in a program of illusions, false rights, and lies not only condones that program and strengthens the illegitimate regime, but insures that the voice of the common people will diminish until we have no voice at all. Of course, our taxes will still be paying for our oppression, once again without representation. Change will come, either positively through the will of the people, or negatively through resistance of oppression. For now, the choice is ours.



Sidewalk Bubblegum ©1993 Clay Butler

Election '96: Turned On? Tuned In? Drop Out!

1996 is proving to be quite an interesting year (and it's still January). Of course, besides the ongoing budget feud, the ignorable government shutdown, and some sticky foreign policy, people are setting their sights to November's presidential election. It is apparent that the politicians are too, as they seem more interested in blaming each other for the messes instead of cleaning them up. Throw in a handful of independent candidates (real and empty hopefuls) and two handfuls of scandals and mudslinging, and the average voting American tends to get lost. The important thing to remember is to look through all the hype and prime time interviews and make decisions without having words put in your mouth. Once you have done this, essentially turned on and tuned in to "our" Democratic system, the best choice is to drop out.

First of all, be honest with yourself. unless you are in the wealthiest top 5% or hold some sway with large private or government corporations,

you can look in the mirror and say with conviction: "There is no choice." You see, the differences between the two parties are merely technical, and all politicians are basically the same. Instead of for the people, of the people, and by the people, the government has become illegitimate. If an idea that was genuinely in the people's best interest was presented, the other side would try to defeat it, or harshly alter it to gain a "political victory." The illusion of choice is persistent, however. By means of the media, many-faceted parades of intricate issues are presented to occupy the "intellectuals" in society, as well as many-faceted parades of scandals, equally intricate to keep the "non-intellectuals" busy. Most of us try to keep up with all of it.

Independent candidates further this illusion of choice. If an independent were elected, he (or she) would garner support from on side or the other, giving us a four year lame duck and a bunch of headaches. Besides, in today's world

external powers. The Empire we subtly built is being recognized and resented, and old "enemies" (such as the USSR, Korea, and China) are slowly regrouping. Internally, through the mechanics of capitalism, a ruling overclass is swiftly developing, much like that of 17th century France and the Russia of 1917 (and Third World countries that are constantly torn apart by civil war).

Even though the fall of our Empire may not be immediately imminent, the conditions and signs are falling into place. It is taken for granted that "history repeats" unless we learn from the mistakes made in the past, and to learn from those mistakes we need to notice when we're making them in the present. Nobody has ever "dismantled" an empire through constructive change, but we should try. The only other alternative is eventual cataclysm.

-Matt Toczko



That's Dr. Hippie to you!

Gentle readers,

With some embarrassment, Ms. Hippie must disclose to her readers that the rumors are true: she is, indeed, pursuing a fancy advanced degree at a nearby prestigious university. While she has never exactly disguised herself as just one of the girls, she has certainly in the past presented herself as far too sensible a person to embark on the pursuit of an official document proving that she is, in fact, beyond any hope of common sense.

But there you are. Blame it on encroaching middle age; blame it on 20 years in an overworked, underpaid women's career; blame it on her thrill-seeking gene; blame it on the superior water quality in Champaign; blame it on an elaborate *folie a duex* with Mr. Hippie. Ms. Hippie is in training to be Dr. Hippie. And of course, after only one semester she has ideas

for organizing the highest education in a much more efficient and civil manner. For example, she thinks that each graduate student should be able to choose one degree requirement and substitute instead the option of being dragged into the street and beaten up. This option in most cases would prove quicker and kinder than the alternative--and basically would serve the same purpose, of course.

Ms. Hippie intends to try to maintain the reality orientation that has traditionally been the trademark of her advice column, even as the combined forces of academic culture and history attempt to make her renounce-it. You can help. Send your questions concerning hip etiquette in the perplexing, forlorn world of today to the Post Amerikan.

Thanks,
Ms. Hippie



Who is Ms. Hippie?

The following article(s) appeared in the April/May 1992 issue of the Post Amerikan.

Ms. Hippie #1

Dear Post,

Thanks for contacting me regarding the whereabouts of the real Ms. Hippie. As insiders may know, Ms. Hippie was driven underground by death threats made against her by an evil impostor, the pseudo-Ms. Hippie. Due to the serious nature of her rival's terrorist tactics, I cannot of course, reveal her whereabouts in an overyuppified, underhippified East Coast corporate/university community that shall remain nameless. She has, however, sent me a letter via a trusted contact, which she has instructed me to convey to the loyal readers of the Post Amerikan. It reads as follows:

Dear Friends in Struggle:

Greetings from the bowels of Amerika--where day by day I pick my way through the fetid, undigested remains of the fodder of the Amerikan Dream. Wish you were here.

But enough pleasantries. Dear readers, I have dire purpose in writing to you today. I'm writing to urge you to always remember, and never forget: "I'M MS. HIPPIE! FORGET THAT OTHER BITCH! Now, she may sound like Ms. Hippie--frankly, Ms. Hippie's rhetoric is not that hard to come by; a couple of Grateful Dead records, a copy of *Be Here Now*, *Rubyfruit Jungle* and *Steal This Book* and you're on your way. And she may look like Ms. Hippie--but trust me, anybody can dress up in a tie dyed pillowcase or turn her grandmother's crummy old silverware into bracelets. So look closely--the braids are extensions!

Ahem. I have another purpose in mind today, as I languish in this snobbish, uptight wasteland of corporate headquarters,

overpriced boutiques and trendy espresso bars, and that is to beg you to GET ME OUTA HERE. Well, that, and to pay homage to my beloved Post Amerikan. We're twenty years old now, and if I may use the Grateful Dead as a *leitmotif*, allow me to state the obvious by saying, gee, strange trip it's been.

I want to tell you about the first time I visited the offices of the Post Amerikan, when it was in the basement of a rundown house on West Monroe. There were revolutionary slogans painted on the cinderblock walls. It was a pig sty. (Please tell me that this still holds true--there must be some *constancy* in life.) I was not yet Ms. Hippie--I suppose at that time I was rather the neophyte Ms. Hippie, without a fully formed consciousness, trailing along in the wake of a feckless boyfriend who pretended to be working on the paper. We walked into the middle of a deadline meeting--it was very tense, because the paper had recently exposed the wrong person as a narc. They were trying to decide what to do about it, as this was serious egg on their collective face.

The Post workers all looked real serious and intimidating--Mark, with his hair looking like a dangerous halo, a huge black cloud around his head, Andrea, with her radically butch haircut, and Deborah, completely silver at twenty-six years old. The uniform was the same for everyone--a flannel shirt over a clever, solganeering t-shirt and old jeans that kind of bagged up around the ass. I imagined that they ate Marx for breakfast and each had a favorite recipe for a homemade incendiary device, and that they never sat in front of their t.v.s with a bowl of chocolate-chip ice cream.

They were using a style of discourse (as the eggheads say) that I was unfamiliar with. Where I come from, the one who wins the argument is the one who talks the loudest. These Post types seemed to be following some code of mutual respect, only talking one at a time, everyone listening, and everyone having

a chance to air their opinion. Gender-neutral language, to the point of changing their own names ("Goldman" would become "Goldperson") was attempted. It was both impressive and excruciating. I would find out later that all this posturing had a playful side--which is something that those who did not know the

Post very well never realized. In fact, some people on the Post never realized it either, which eventually caused some problems. But I digress.

So what were they going to do about this poor guy who had been exposed as a narc? This had never happened before. I said they should send him a fruit basket with a little apology. They said the fruit basket was a good idea, but could we be sure that the fruit was picked by organized farm workers? I was in love with the paper almost from that first meeting on, when I started to understand their style--the Post crew embodied a quirky combination of qualities that seemed to work together in the most delightful way--serious political beliefs held in check by playfulness and nonsense. You would never make it if you couldn't tease your own dogma. Those who couldn't left.

Sexuality. There was plenty in all varieties, and that was the nicest thing about the group--people were comfortable with each other. O, the parties we would have--the unholy unions we would make. But we took it in stride and the collective survived more than a few non-monogamous relationships, and *that* is a real testament.

You know, readers, Ms. Hippie would not be here today if not for the Post, because it was there I learned the basis for what I think I know. For instance, I think I learned the words "dogma" and "rhetoric" and "ideology" there, which I'll admit is somewhat regrettable. But I also learned from the Post what I could do without permission from the authorities--from



proclaiming ownership of my body, to speaking my mind (still working out a few bugs on that one), to mixing my metaphors, to launching impossible schemes that would never work, but so what?

Honest to Dog, readers, the example of the people at the *Post* enabled me to do things intellectually and creatively that I never imagined. I had never been around such smart and imaginative people and believe that I never will again. Ironically, the *Post Amerikan* is responsible for my entrance into this institution of higher learning where I am spending my exile, preparing for the next phase of my life as an academic. So when Ms. Hippie gets her hotshit job after this hotshit education, she can send the paper a big check to assuage her guilt about making money. Ain't life funny?

--Readers: At this point, Ms. Hippie's letter trails off, and if I'm not mistaken, the paper is stained with tears, as they say. She asks me to ask you to please forgive her backsliding into the sentimental there toward the end, but asks, what good is a sharp memory if you can't slice open your own heart with it now and then? I'm not sure what that means.

Happy Birthday to you--US! Keep those home fires burning.

--Laurie Dahlberg

Ms. Hippie #2

Dear *Post*,

I hear through the grapevine that the false Ms. Hippie may be sending a swoony, sentimental letter via Laurie Dahlberg--a letter that in true ersatz Ms. Hippie style enchants the reader with its elegant prose and leads one to believe, through the use of specific insider details, that she is, indeed, the true Ms. Hippie. Let me set this straight (excuse the expression): I'M MS. HIPPIE! FORGET THAT OTHER VIXEN!

Well, that's not exactly right. It's been twenty years; it's time for the truth. The Other Ms. Hippie (the one who uses the vulgar word in our traditional battlecry, may I point out) and I are actually collaborators from way back. Many *Post* documents are products of both of our fertile minds and vicious hearts, including the Ms. Hippie advice column. We have also penned poignant fundraising letters and my personal favorite, the *Post* religion poll, which I sincerely hope the staffers will reprint in whole or part in this issue. It has the deep universality of a classic, and besides, Ms. Hippie actually did fall on the floor laughing as we composed it, an act that she always had considered hyperbolic up to that time.

Ms. Hippie does have another purpose in mind today. I would like to point out that my underlying philosophy in the Ms. Hippie column is one that should be given serious as well as lighthearted attention. A bit of knowledge about old-fashioned politeness would do the modern world much good. If we all followed rules of verbal etiquette, for example, people would no more call our fellow creatures by unwelcome names (fag, jig, and so on) than they would neglect writing a thank you note to a dinner hostess. Roommates would

not deliver diatribes nor stomp the stairs with their motorcycle boots; bus riders would modestly avert their eyes as a traveling companion chased her wayward diaphragm rolling down the Greyhound aisle and fourth-time brides would not expect fourth wedding gifts from their parents' neighbors.

Ms. Hippie would also like to point out that her blue jeans have never bagged up around her ass. As usual, Ms. Hippie chooses vivacity over veracity. Keep up the good work, sis.

--Phoebe Caulfield

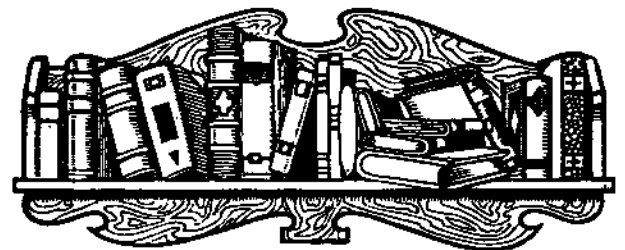
Dear Ms. Hippie

The following appeared in the Dec/Jan 1990-1991 issue of the *Post Amerikan*.

Dear Ms. Hippie,

Would you take some time to share your opinions about reference books? For example, what type of reference books should we all have in our homes? Is a good dictionary enough in the 1990's? What is the best encyclopedia? When do reference books become outdated? What should we do with them when they do become outdated? What reference books does Ms. Hippie use? What is Ms. Hippie's favorite reference book? What is a "must have" for all good lefties?

You are so smart, Ms. Hippie, and you seem to have an endless supply of information and



knowledge. I know that much of your intelligence comes from your natural hippie good sense, but there must be more to it. Please share.

Yours truly,

Waiting in "Reference"

MOTHER MURPHY'S
 ROCK-N-ROLL EMPORIUM EST. 1968
 111 1/2 NORTH ST. NORMAL IL 61761
 (309) 452-6712

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cont.

Dear Ref,

All truly interesting question have one answer: it depends. For various brands of lefties, we have various types of reference books. Those who need to make LSD at home, for example, will find The Anarchist's Cookbook invaluable; on the other hand, those who sometimes feel shaky about their Kierkegaard need The Harper Dictionary of Modern Thought. Some lefties will find themselves in both groups—right on!

Ms. Hippie used to believe that a dose of hallucinogens was necessary at least every six weeks to keep her mind clear. Perhaps for this reason, she now continually needs her Rodale's The Synonym Finder to recover the words that get stuck on the tip of her tongue (like fine windowpane acid).

Every leftie needs a copy of the U.S. Constitution, though we may want to pencil out the fourth amendment as no longer in force. It's nice to have some idea what you're talking about when you "scream 'unconstitutional,'" as right-wingers grumpily phrase it. The New York Public Library Desk Reference includes this document, as well as handy info about state flowers, how to apply for a passport, ZIP codes, and—pay attention now—reference books and how to use them.

Ms. Hippie also is a great fan of the dictionary—in fact, she aims to have one in every room of the house. Believe it or not, she also finds her Charlotte Ford's Etiquette very helpful; most lefties have purposely tried not to learn bourgeois customs by heart; thus, we must look them up when we do want to be polite. These occasions happen more and more often as one ages, Ms. Hippie finds. Also a function of age, perhaps, is her temporary inability to keep the plots of Shakespeare's comedies completely distinct; for this, she likes Benet's Reader's Encyclopedia on hand.

If a leftie is lucky enough to live where good libraries abound, as we do, a reference rule of thumb is this: What do I need to know at 2 or 3 in the morning? The answer will guide you to the books you need to own. For some, it may be The Joy of Sex; for others, Elements of Grammar for Writers; for others, The Tassajara Bread Book; and for still others, The Golden Bough (about myth and symbol from many eras and cultures).



Another rule of thumb (or back) is this: How many more times do I intend to move? Especially when you're thinking about a set of encyclopedias, this question comes to mind. The cost is also a consideration. You can buy a cheap set at a garage sale if all you need to know at 2 in the morning is the difference between a dolphin and a porpoise or the family relationship between Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt (before marriage). If you wake up suddenly needing to know names of countries in Africa, for example, elderly World Books will do you no good, Ms. Hippie is happy to say. Don't depend on them for your subatomic particles, either.

Concerning encyclopedias, if you have or plan to have a computer in the house, you might decide to sit and wait until you can get one on disk. There are a couple out now, but in the future you will probably have your choice. For now, maybe you can make do with a one-volume version like the Columbia Concise Encyclopedia.

At this point, Ms. Hippie is struck with the hope that you really meant your question. She fears that she might have made a fool of herself by taking you seriously instead of saying something super-hip, like, "Knowledge is all in your soul, man—you don't need any lousy books to reveal the Truth!" See how much good this jive does you when you need to know a ZIP code at 4 a.m., whippersnapper.

Insouciantly,
Ms. Hippie

Dear Ms. Hippie,

I have a slight problem. Well, actually, it's not slight at all. God just visited our neighborhood and totalled my car. I know that sounds crazy but it's the truth. You see recently a 74 year old man "blacked out" and rammed his car into several—four to be exact—cars which were parked at the time (9:00 a.m. on Sunday morning) outside my house, which isn't even a church.

His insurance company (a HUGE corporation based right here in Bloomington) is now claiming that this event was in fact an Act of God. Wild, huh? You see, because this old man has no prior medical history, because he wasn't taking any form of medication, because he had no prior knowledge that he was going to "black out," this complete obliteration of four cars wasn't really negligence on the driver's part, but rather—according to Illinois State law—it was an "Act of God."

I'm very confused. I don't believe in God. So first off, I don't know whether I'm supposed to be grateful or what. And second, why should God choose a 74 year old white man as his representative on earth? Wasn't his troop all made up of young, handsome dark men? And third, why would God tell him to recklessly smash the shit out of four parked cars? Surely, God would have better things to do with his time on Sunday morning?

I feel kind of pissed off really as I was asleep in bed and missed it. I mean, this could be one of those occasions that they'll write about when they put out The Holy Bible, vol. II in 6,000 years time. Should I just pray for a repeat next week, or does God only hit a time like Bloomington just the one time? Also, I feel ingrateful because given the choice, I'd rather have my car back than witness God striking twice. Should I try praying for the return of my car as was? If so, for how long would be an appropriate length of time to set aside? Forty days and forty nights seem to ring a bell. I've never been in this situation before, so I'm in need of guidance

--Yours Waiting for A Sign

Dear Waiting,

One must understand, living here in Bloomington-Normal, that anything that is not an act of State Farm is an act of God. After all, every fifth building around here houses either a State Farm branch or a place of worship. Let's look at some other basic facts that you seem to misunderstand.

Like the nature of insurance: an insurance policy is only good for events that the insurer expects to happen. Unexpected events are never covered. These are acts of God. These acts seem to be negative—things like billboards falling down on people's houses. Ms. Hippie has never heard this phrase officially used in the context of *pleasant* unexpected events—like finding a hundred dollar bill on the parkway or having a second orgasm. In fact, *these* would ordinarily be labeled as acts of the devil.

Next, let's look at the nature of institutional language. At its best, it has a rather elegant indirectness. Consider, for example, all the signs you see that ask you to do something completely against human nature "for your convenience." Thus, we can assume that an "act of god" has nothing to do with the deity or religion. It is merely the insurance company's nice way to say "a nasty, messy event that we want nothing to do with." With this translation, you will see that your theological questions are useless. Most are.

Ms. Hippie suspects that neither State Farm nor God will be replacing your car. For your convenience, you may do so.

Dear Ms. Hippie,

At the age of 31 I am suddenly compelled to put happy faces at the end of my letters, etc. Is this a sign of complete mental debility? Any suggestions?

--A Happy Camper

Dear Ms. Hippie:

As survivors of Freudian psychotherapy, we are led to question seriously the appropriateness of using Freud's ideas for modelling feminist action of any kind—intellectual or otherwise. We should tell you that some of our feminist friends say, "Oh, well, this is *revised* Freudian theory." As if somehow that makes up for all the serious damage Freud's done to women. We mean, we're seriously sick of this revisionist shit.

After all, isn't Freud the arch male chauvinist pig? I mean, didn't he say that the real problem with women is that we have no sense of justice? And that women just eat ourselves alive because we have vaginas rather than penises? We mean, how can all our smart, committed feminist friends go around apologizing for this guy?

But we want to be fair, Ms. Hippie. And we know that you are the perfect woman for us to turn to in our hour of need. Is there any hope for Freud? Or for feminists who accept even some of what Freud says? And what did that guy want from us women anyway?

--Some of The Radical Gals

Dear Gals,

Ms. Hippie doesn't know about you-all, but she herself could barely get through a day as a feminist without that luscious smorgasbord of defense mechanisms that Freud gave such exotic, lipsmacking names. Good for usin', good for accusin'—what more could we want?



Dear Ms. Hippie,

The children who live next door to me have been coming to my house lately, inquiring if they can do any chores for me. They of course expect to receive financial remuneration for their activities.

Usually I can't think of anything that they can do that would actually be useful or that wouldn't destroy my house in the process. Am I obliged to create chores for these children? If there is something that they can do for me, what is a reasonable amount of money to pay them? (They are about 8 and 11 years old. I think—I don't know.)

Signed,
Confused by Children

Dear Confused,

Those damn kids can smell you a mile away if you're confused by them, and no shred of decency will keep them from snookering you if at all possible. They have absolutely no moral development, you know, until at least 33.

Ask them if they've heard of paper routes. This is a system whereby children nag and whine and make their own parents get up at ungodly hours and deliver newspapers, then hand over the money. It keeps the kids off your back—and remember, you are not the one who decided the planet needed their grubby little genes upon it.

You are not obliged to create chores. There is no reasonable amount of money that would make the presence of greedy children halfway tolerable. Next time you see them coming, eat a bulb of garlic, draw them close, and tell them all

about the old days when children were good and pure and did neighbor's chores for fun. They hate that.

Dear Ms. Hippie,

I have noticed throughout my years of hanging out with the "lefties" in town that many of them tend to scoff at any attempts I have made to find peace in my life. You know—meditation, crystals, runes, etc. It is difficult because I do not feel at ease with the New Age "crowd," yet I am increasingly reluctant to share some of my views with my more politically active friends. Help, Ms. Hippie. Is what they say true? Is happiness synonymous with idiocy? Or can one find inner peace and still be a revolutionary?

Signed,

Pax Trot

Dear Pax,

It drives some people crazy when you mix your superstitions, Ms. Hippie has noticed. Activists most frequently operate upon a superstition utterly unsupported by history (the basic goodness and deserving nature of humanity), and in Ms. Hippie's eyes they have no real room to scoff at people who decide how to conduct themselves through interpreting stick figures on little stones.

However, it seems you've noticed that the company you keep when crystal gazing lacks the overall zippiness and nasty sense of humor that makes political activists lively and fun. Maybe we lack inner peace, but we have a lot of great stories to tell.

Finally, is happiness synonymous with idiocy? Whoever "they" are that said this are making a common equation of having a social conscience with having a pervasive sense of guilt and having to eat all your peas. This doctrine is taught in the Unitarian church and such cults that are otherwise quite rational. It's a mystery . . . meditate on it.

Dear Ms. Hippie,

I have a problem relating to cats, landlords and wounded feelings.

My landlord, who, I should mention, is also my neighbor and friend, himself supports quite a menagerie—parrots, fish, rabbits, even an eel. Consequently, he does not object on principle to my two cats. Indeed, he even tried in his bouncy, aggressive, but-no-harm-intended way to make friends with them. In short, Ms. Hippie, he would insist on petting them.

To my shame, I saw nothing wrong with this practice until at least one of my adorable kitties developed spastic colitis. After earnest consultation with the veterinarian of my choice, I concluded that while their affliction might have been organic in nature, it could well be, as they say, stress-related.

Upon due consideration of the evidence, I came to the inevitable conclusion that theirs was not a problem organic in origin. In a word, Ms. Hippie, my bouncy landlord, friend and neighbor was scaring my kitties shitless.

I, of course, immediately explained to him that although he meant no harm, scaring two kitties shitless was no small thing, especially for a landlord famed as an eminently humane and loving breeder of exotic birds, and that he should cease and desist from his insistent petting.

My kitties, meantime, have taken to hiding on hearing his approach. My bouncy landlord, in turn, now pouts that I should trade in my adorable kitties for new ones which, presumably, could be conditioned to more aggressive petting. Clearly, I am not about to do that, which he well knows. Not really my problem, I know, Ms. Hippie, but I do so hate to see his feelings hurt. What, if anything, should I do?

--Tenant In A Quandary

Dear Tenant,

As far as Ms. Hippie knows, tenants are not legally responsible to change pets upon the landlord's command. Reread your lease, though—in a college town, the rule is possibly written in there. If not, you can suggest to your landlord that he check-pet all animals' whose masters he intends to rent to, to assure the level of cuddliness he requires.





Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues



ACTIVIST ALERT

of Cobb Coalition to be connected with organizers in your area at (404) 814-0228 or Torch_Out@aol.com.

Contact the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, and demand the Olympics out of Cobb! Billy Payne, President, Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games; P.O. Box 1996; Atlanta, GA 30301-1996; (404) 224-1901, Fax (404) 224-1998 Dr. Leroy Walker, President, US Olympic Committee, 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909. (919) 361-2355, Fax (919) 361-2788.

Amendment 2 and You

The Supreme Court's decision on Colorado's anti-gay constitutional amendment (passed by voters in November '92) will reverberate for gays and lesbians across the country. On October 9th, the Court heard arguments on the constitutionality of Amendment 2. They also heard from hundreds of activists across the country who participated in the Undo 2 Day of Action, organized by NGLTF and Colorado organizations, including Equality Colorado and Ground Zero. Over thirty actions across the country were held, including a sing-out in Tucson, Arizona, a candlelight vigil in Atlanta, and a press conference in Detroit. This coordinated day of action received extensive media coverage both locally and nationally, including on CNN Headline News.

Planning is now underway for a coordinated response the day the decision (expected anytime between January and June) is rendered. Be ready to raise our collective voice once again in demonstration or celebration by organizing an Undo 2 in your community.

ACTION:

Join the Undo 2 Action Network by calling NGLTF Field Organizer Tracey Conaty at (202) 332-6483 ext. 3303. You will receive an Undo 2 Action Kit which includes background information on Amendment 2, a matrix of possible decisions by the Court and their meaning, and the latest on plans for a unified response to the Court's decision.

Olympics 96 Going Out of the Way for Bigotry

One year after pulling the Olympic Volleyball competition from Cobb County, Georgia, Olympic officials in July announced that they would be routing the Olympic Torch through the county. In August, 1993 Cobb County officials passed a resolution condemning the "The Gay Lifestyle," and on the second anniversary of the resolution, officials stated they will NOT rescind it. Cobb County is also the headquarters for many right-wing extremist groups.

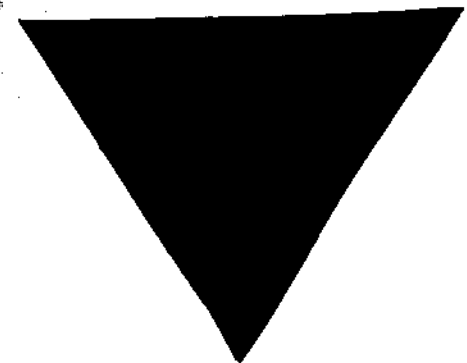
The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) is going out of its way to condone that hate politics and extremism of Cobb County as the county if far out of the way of Metro Atlanta where the relay ends. ACOG is also blatantly disregarding its agreement with the Olympics Out of Cobb Coalition (OOC). In July 1994, ACOG agreed not to hold any sanctioned events of any kind in Cobb County. Activists responsible for blocking the volleyball competition in Cobb County are hard at work to reroute the torch out of Cobb. Protest are scheduled across the country as the Torch begins its trek from Los Angeles on April 27th to Atlanta - 15,000 miles and 84 days later.

ACTION:

Call 1-800-496-COKE to find out when the Torch is coming to your area (they can even tell you the exact streets). If there is a protest already planned, attend it and help spread the word. If a protest isn't already planned for your area, organize one. Contact Olympics Out

Creating Change Makes History

Activists from across the nation gathered in Detroit, Mich., to grapple with critical challenges, savor recent civil rights victories, and prepare for new attacks on gay and lesbian equality. NGLTF's 8th annual "Creating Change Conference" was the largest ever gathering of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender activists in the country. This year's event, held Nov. 8-12, attracted some 2,000 activists from 48 states and the District of Columbia. Participants attended 160 workshops and witnessed movement history in the brilliant and powerful message of queer activist Elias Farajaje Jones in his plenary speech, "Ain't I a Queer".



Next year's conference will be held Veteran's Day Weekend in Alexandria, Va., in the Washington, D.C./Capital area immediately following the 1996 presidential elections. It's not too early to begin planning to attend. Organizers from around the country will analyze the election results and discuss the most pressing public policy issues facing the g/l/b/t movement. Be a part of this critical dialogue on strategies to carry the Movement through the next century.

Source: NGLT Activist Alert
December 1995

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