

Volume I

May, 1988

## A Degree in Homophobia: Pittsburgh's Colleges and Universities

Pittsburgh has been called "America's most livable city," though it would be a challenge to find gays or lesbians who agree. The general attitude seems to be that Pittsburgh is one of the more conservative and closeted cities in the nation, and that feelings of homophobia run deep throughout the city's many communities. College campuses, which are thought of as havens of liberalism and openness, in many ways are exactly the opposite in Pittsburgh. There is a latent negativity towards lesbians and gays in local universities, and occasional acts of hostility are directed towards those who are not afraid to organize and speak out. However, these organizations are gradually becoming part of the fabric of university life, in spite of difficulties. Unfortunately, some schools have no organizations at all, usually as a result of either official restrictions or a repressive atmosphere. Chatham College, a women's liberal arts college, is such a school. Despite the success in the late '60's and early '70's of "The Wild Sisters," a lesbian feminist organization, there no longer exists a group designed to pull lesbians together. A primary reason for this, according to students we spoke to, was the fear that a lesbian organization would identify women solely by their sexual orientation, undermining the purpose of such a group. The fear of condemnation in such a small college is also a strong prohibitive factor.

At Indiana University of Pennsylvania, a lesbian and gay organization exists, but only as a support group subsidiary to the school's counseling center. The hostility there

con't pg. 5

## WHERE ARE WE?

— Michael McFadden

Years ago the famous Kinsey study of human sexual response revealed that one in ten people in America is gay. This means that Pittsburgh, a city which at last count had 387,000 diehard citizens (but falling fast) has about 40,000 gay women and men. Inclusion of the surrounding area brings the figure up to a whopping 130,000. These figures are a never-ending source of bemusement and fascination for me, since I see the same people wherever I go, in establishments that barely hold more than a thousand people.

Admittedly, a number of the Steel City's finest inverts are still in the developmental stages — but that does not solve the mystery entirely. I insist this is not an error of perception. We in the political segment of the community are always on the lookout for big mailing lists of local queer folk, and it is truly disheartening that the one we look on so covetously, the top secret Travelers' list, boasts a paltry 11,000 names. Sadder still is that a number of these are doubtlessly out-of-towners: it seems one in three bar patrons is in twilight exile from Ohio. Perhaps a trip to Youngstown, Dayton, or Steubenville would reveal the missing chunk of the gay community here, but I doubt it. The so-called social "alternatives" to the bars enjoy even feeble patronage, and the political groups consist of a small core of about 50 committed individuals assisted by about 200 more who pass in and out.

How many in the 130,000 have never been on a date with a member of the same sex? For what percentage of men do wordless trysts in Schenley Park comprise the sum total of their gay experience? How

## About Our Name

In every fairytale, words have power, and those who own the words have power over what the words name. Most of the words that name us as gay people have begun as words used against us, words invented for us by others — "lesbo," "faggot," "dyke," "homo," "fairy" and "queer." We have always been named from the outside, and perhaps it is time we name ourselves. In the meantime, however, one strategy for self-empowerment is to appropriate them for ourselves, to take the words away from those who use them to hurt us and shame us. We view our use of the word "queer" as just such an act, an act of stealing the language, an act of power. And, as the new speakers of the word, we give it new meaning and leave its inventors speechless. We take the word back proudly — Keystone Queers, you know who you are!

many lesbians are married? (I have lost count of the number of women I've met who play lover/counselor to women who will not self-identify as lesbian.) How many of those grim-faced souls who travel in endless circles around Dithridge and Craig have never set foot in the Holiday a block away? What percentage of gay people have no gay friends? How many are only fantasizing?

All of this is talk around the central question: WHERE ARE WE? This is a question that propagates more questions and no answers. We'll know the who's, where's and what's of each other only after we have forged something resembling a community. Thus far we haven't.

con't on pg. 2



'WHERE' from pg. 1

The complete impossibility of really knowing our community (for lack of a more descriptive word) has not kept some presumptuous people from presuming they do. I recently heard one gay "leader" say, "there are no gay people in Kennedy Township." While few of the others in the local gay establishment are as explicit about it, they seem to labor under the same misapprehension. Why else would 90% of all commercial, social, and religious gay community life take place downtown and at points east? Why else would it be so unvarying, dated, and stereotypical? We keep insisting to an ignorant straight public that we are everywhere and that we are a huge, diverse group of people, but we have a social and political life in Pittsburgh that appears to emanate from wholly opposite assumptions. It could well be that people just aren't coming out here. No doubt a lot of inducement is needed to help them overcome the particularly oppressive atmosphere of Pittsburgh's redneck Catholic atmosphere, and Pittsburgh gay life, so invisible and so limited in its offerings, may just not be doing the job.

Gay people in Pittsburgh are almost wholly reliant on the commercial sector for filling the gaps left by oppression. Gay business people do not differ from their straight counterparts in seeking to maximize gains while keeping costs and effort to a minimum. No one can say for sure whether gay bars owe their existence entirely to our oppression (we might still gather separately in a nonoppressed state), but our oppression certainly gives them a good deal of leverage. The DJ at one of the downtown bars explained this succinctly when, in response to all the boos and hisses elicited by the announcement of a new cover charge, he said, "Come on, people, you can't dance together in the straight bars, can you?"

The same DJ was less sympathetic to his boss' imperatives when he was told to keep the record playlist whiter: too much black trade was coming in and they weren't spending enough money to offset the exodus of racists that their increasing numbers might inspire. However reprehensible the result, the boss was showing sound business sense. Black peo-

ple probably weren't spending much money, because, in general, they don't have much money. It is widely believed that the Tender Trap failed because it attracted a largely black clientele.

For the same reason, women and plebs of all stripes are underrepresented in local gay life. If one knew absolutely nothing about gay people, he or she might conclude after a trip through our bars that gayness is disproportionately prevalent among middle class white males with a taste for dopey music, seventies culture, and political oblivion. The more thoughtful observer would conclude, instead, that these are simply, for reasons of their affluence and low expectations, commercial gaydom's preferred customers. It's their tastes that will be catered to, as well as if need be, their prejudices. The alienation that a black lesbian might feel at the sight of hundreds of middle class white men doing Belinda Carlisle to an interminable Go-Go's medley is not arbitrary. It has been deliberately engineered. Ask the door man. Ask the DJ. Ask the owner.

To be fair, the degree to which this alienation is contrived varies from place to place. Quite often it is an error of omission rather than commission. Because being gay has always been a pay-as-you-go affair, and the most active and visible participants have been those most able to pay (white males). The gay identity, both to gays and straights has been white, male and middle class. Everyone else is excluded unconsciously. The stereotypes that gay men tease each other about, love of the arts, antiques, shopping, home furnishings and the myth of impeccable taste in everything, have much closer affiliations to the consumerism, ambition, and snobbery of the mainstream middle class whence these preferred customers of gay "culture" spring, than to any sensibility that inevitably emerges from our sexuality or our disaffiliation. There are a number of faggots in Shadyside who I venture could chat more empathically with the Reagans than they would with a gay person from Homewood-Brush-ton.

That this minority has become representative testifies to how much Americans are realized and recog-

con't on pg. 7

## BOYCOTTS & LETTERS

- The latest gay philosophy joke around town, which isn't really much of a joke, is the question, "If 600,000 gays marched past the White House and the media ignored them, would they still make a noise?" Of course this is exactly what happened during October's march, and to protest the fact that both Time and Newsweek chose to consider miles of demonstrators "not news," several gay groups, including CRY OUT!, are calling for a boycott. Lesbians, gays, and friends who support our issues are urged to cancel their subscriptions and to tell the magazines why they are doing so. In addition, subscription cards can be mailed back to the magazines with only a pink triangle stamped on them, or with some other message indicating that we are out here. Time has already met with representatives from GLAD in response to boycotters.
- In February, Representative Sirianni introduced House Bill 2160, which would mandate that the remains of people who have died of AIDS must be cremated—burial would be outlawed. Write to protest this bill: The Honorable Carmel Sirianni/ Main Capital Building/House Post Office Box 103, Harrisburg, PA 17120.
- On April 12th, City Council heard testimony from many supporters of gay civil liberties and the question of a gay rights ordinance was addressed. Write to all City Council members to encourage them to support such an ordinance. Also write to Human Relations Commission Chairperson Constance Wellons/ 120 Climax St./PGH, PA 15210.
- The Karen Thompson/Sharon Kowalski case is a crucial test of lesbian/gay rights. Funds are desperately needed for the court case, and may be sent to: The Minnesota Gay and Lesbian Legal Association for Personal Liberties/c/o Suzanne Born/3436 Holmes Ave./ Minneapolis, MN 55408.



## Dave Stewart

Hopefully, you will have noticed that the lesbian and gay community of Pittsburgh has been pretty lively these days. The March on Washington last October certainly gave us a much needed boost. Starting with the March Committee, several new groups have formed: CRY OUT!, the League of Gay and Lesbian Voters (LGLV), and now the *Keystone Queer Dispatch*. These groups, along with those that have been here awhile, are indications that Pittsburgh's Lesbian/Gay community has reached a new level of awareness. The movement is in fact moving again. Now the question is one of direction. Certainly we all want to establish our legal, civil and social rights. Certainly we want the inequities that we as lesbian/gay people face redressed. But how?

Originally, my contribution to the first edition of the KQD was going to be titled, "The Colonization of Southside." Establishing a political power base is something I view to be a top priority. Having our own neighborhood is one way to do this. But larger issues began to concern me. Issues like, who is this community anyway? Just exactly what is the range of activities and activism? Would anybody else actually want a gay neighborhood? How do the "old timers" view the state of our community today? What is our history as a community? What actions would find their way onto an agenda that was formed by all the parts that make the whole of our community?

Such an agenda would go a long way towards answering the question of direction asked earlier. So, this article has become a request for a town meeting, which goes some of the way towards answering the question of how. So how about it? Let's have a town meeting. And not just the politicians, let's have the softball league and business owners too.

## Editorial

The editorial staff of the *Keystone Queer Dispatch* would like to thank *OUT* magazine for our existence. Were it not for *OUT*'s perpetration of gay stereotypes, its internalized homophobia, the complete invisibility of the lesbian in its pages, its lack of discussion of issues relevant to gay people, and its almost total lack of local news and topics, we would, very simply, not have come into being at all. As it is, however, we and many other gay men and lesbians in Pittsburgh and the surrounding area feel that *OUT* does a disservice to us. While it may represent one segment of the gay community, or, more accurately, one small segment of the lives of some members of the gay community, it does not present a vision of the gay person as a whole person, as one who works, reads, thinks, relaxes, and plays, as well as has sex (or doesn't, as the case may be). It is the goal of the *Queer Dispatch* to begin to fill some of these gaps. We wish, instead, to create a forum for discussion and to become a place for dialogue on issues affecting us socially, politically, and personally. We hope to stimulate discussion; we hope to stimulate action. We hope to become a quarterly newspaper/magazine that represents the gay community in all its many voices. We welcome responses, articles, and essays from our readers. These *Keystone Quers* are quiet no more.

## State of the Community: Women and Men

- Cindy Hoffman

In looking at the state of Pittsburgh's gay community, the separation that exists between gay men and lesbians is a chasm that cannot be ignored. While many individuals do maintain personal friendships across this gap, at a public and social level there is scarcely any connection between us at all, and the roots of this seem to be in the same dichotomized gender thinking that produces homophobia in our culture as a whole.

Historically, the separation was formalized in the early days of the Gay Liberation movement, when many lesbians became frustrated with the largely male-dominated gay rights groups, and, as Women's Liberation began, found that they had more in common politically with straight feminists than they had with gay men. Although some might feel that for this twenty-year-old issue to be affecting us today is simply hanging on to the past, recent data on the feminization of poverty, for instance, suggests that very little has changed for the better for women during that twenty-year period, and that women still form a much more clearly defined class politically than do gays.

con't on pg. 4

## Travelers' Raid Update

For those gays lucky enough to be present at the public hearing before City Council on April 12th, that morning was a time when it felt pretty good to be gay in Pittsburgh, to be out, and to be talking to our council members about the harassment, violence, and bigotry against us in this city. One of the most stubborn fantasies of that portion of the heterosexual world that makes decisions about such things is that "there is no discrimination against gays" (of course not, as long as we keep hidden), and the other is that we are an infinitesimally small group of people. Fortunately, both these issues were raised at the hearing, before a very receptive City Council. Council members present were Masloff, Lyons, Coyne, Pollock, and Ferlo. - Michelle Madoff could not, unfortunately, be present, and our friend "The Jeep" somehow overlooked it, to no one's surprise.

Although Glen Canon, Public Safety Director, was present for much of the hearing, no one from his office nor from the police department was allowed to testify since they are presently in litigation over the raid. Approximately twenty people did testify, including several eyewitnesses to the raid. Their testimony was hampered by council president Sophie Masloff's decision that because of the tv cameras, they could not repeat the language actually used by police during the raid and instead had to resort to saying "effing" and, with a good laugh from the crowd, "He called me a, uh... 'homosexual'..." rather than using "the c-word." Indeed, the language would no doubt have been offensive to Madame Chair and to greater Pittsburgh's television audience, but this is, in itself, testimony to the inappropriateness of the police's behavior.

Other testimony was offered by several representatives of the

con't on pg. 5



Gay men, within this large-scale political perspective, are still men, economically and politically, and bear the privileges of that in this male-honoring society. As a whole, they have access to money and power as part of that male privilege, and many gay men have for a number of years been content to live the comfortable life available to them as a man. This has not built good faith with women. Although some individual gay men are, of course, sympathetic with issue of women's oppression, there is nothing inherent in being a gay man that makes that man any more woman-honoring than the culture as a whole. In fact, much of the gay world as it is manifested publically seems to perpetrate the misogyny of straight culture.

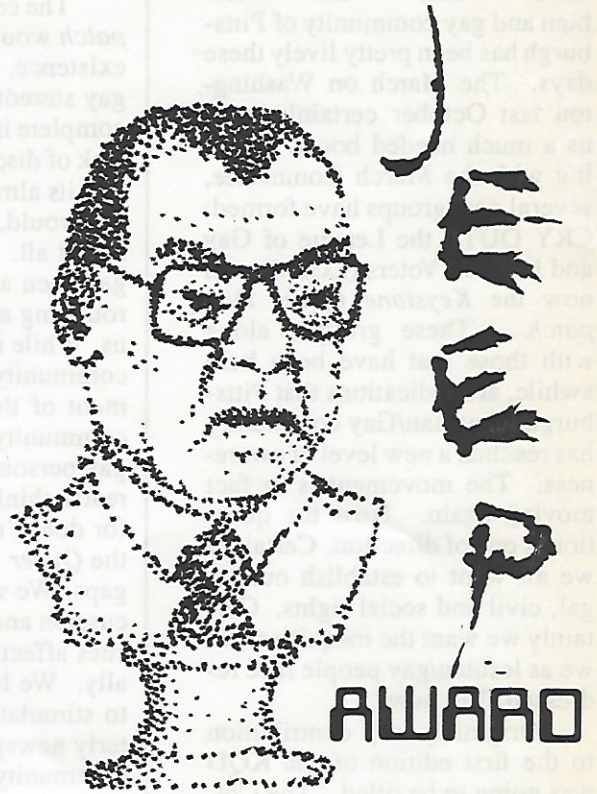
If much of the straight world mistakenly believes that all gay men to be "effeminate" (and many writers, both men and women, have suggested that violence against gay men is at base a manifestation of woman-hating), the gay world often seems to respond with an attitude that can be seen as "as manly as you, only more so," with its dial "MACHO" acronyms and its public displays of hammers and tool belts. While I personally would just as soon that if men are going to be "macho" they direct it at each other and not me (and in this regard, at least, gay men are nicer to be around than some straight men), this does not mitigate that fact that this dimension of the gay male world participates in a huge gender myth that worships the phallus and controls the womb. By and large, the gay men's community does not seem to grasp that very often the way in which their love of men is articulated at a public level becomes an extension of the cultures worship of maleness at the expense of femaleness.

All of this has led various feminists to create a rationale for the separation of lesbians from gay men, and politically this is a very sensible strategy. On a

more everyday level, however, these macho aspects of the gay world are simply alien and alienating to many lesbians. In addition, the need for the re-creation of women's culture has meant that much lesbian attention has been focussed on consciously reinventing "woman" and for this some womanspace, apart from the male-created culture, both straight and gay, has been requisite.

Recently, gay men have also expressed some anger and bitterness at the women's community for what they perceive to be our unconcern with AIDS (although so far this has not created a serious split here in Pittsburgh as it has elsewhere), but many women feel that just as gay men have by and large not concerned themselves with women's issues, lesbians need not concern themselves with AIDS. Both views are obviously short-sided, for lesbians, though a low-risk group, are not immune to AIDS, and since gay men themselves suffer because of a woman-hating culture, it is clearly to their advantage to work toward an understanding, at least, of sexism and the oppression and control of women, and the way in which they can be said to participate in it. This is certainly necessary if any community building between men and women is to happen. But more importantly, both views reflect a lack of compassion that is frightening, as if our only concern for justice and life had to do with justice and life for ourselves. The gay community is an incredibly diverse community, crossing lines of race, class, age and gender, and in order for us to be a community, certainly in order for us to be unified enough to create a political presence, we must put no gay person in a position of choosing one alliance over another. I will not split my life into parts and separate my concerns about racism from their concerns about homophobia. To recall a phrase from an earlier civil rights movement, none of us can be free until all of us are free, because as long as any particular

con't on pg. 5



### The Jeep Award

In an effort to recognize individuals in the state of Pennsylvania for their extraordinary contribution to the futherance of human dignity, the *Keystone Queer Dispatch* is instituting "The Jeep Award." And who is more appropriate to inaugurate this honor than Jeep De Pasquale himself?!

So, who is the man behind this award? Below, we hope to provide you with a few insights:

Occupation: Shouting "Queer," and making Michelle Madoff cry

Preoccupation: rooting out "known queers"

Dream Vacation: The sewers of Europe

Person he'd most like to have dinner with: Joseph McCarthy

Secret Vice: public displays of flatulence

Book he'd most like to read when he has the time: *Hop on Pop*, by Dr. Seuss

Self description: literate, articulate, humanitarian, and a real "leg" man.

Hats off to you, Jeep! And next issue, stay tuned for "Jeep Watch."



'COLLEGES' from pg. 1

seems to be more evident than in most other colleges in Pittsburgh. As a result of frequent and fairly violent reactions to campus postering, their group has resorted to advertising solely through the school newspaper. According to an active member, this pushes them into a quieter position on campus than they would like. There was once an active Gay and Lesbian Alliance (GALA) which dropped out of existence due to lack of support from students, but there are stirrings of reviving that group. Currently, attracting people to their meetings has not posed an immediate problem. The usual attendance is about 23 people, but according to the member we talked to, he "couldn't believe that there weren't more people out there" who simply don't attend.

The University of Pittsburgh's GALA is one of only two lesbian and gay groups in Pittsburgh which exist as independent student organizations. Though they receive funding from Pitt, they are entirely student run and unaffiliated with any other campus organizations. After a long period of dormancy, Pitt GALA has begun to get back on its feet and reestablish itself in the campus community. We spoke to Joel Rapoport, one of the group's co-chairs, who told us that the general feeling towards the group is one of latent malice. However, as on other campuses, there have been instances of open homophobia. In reply to a poster asking students to document cases of personal discrimination based on sexual orientation, there was a counter-postering voicing harsh anti-gay sentiments and abusive mail was sent to the GALA office. According to Rapoport, the intimidation is so great that faculty members are afraid to come out for fear of discrimination and loss of tenure. There is also a documented case of a student being given a failing grade based on sexual orientation. Despite this prevailing attitude, Pitt GALA receives the same money as all other campus groups, protected by the university's strict guidelines for group funding. Membership is small, but there is a dedicated core of people work-

ing to strengthen the group's position on campus and in the general community.

#### Carnegie

Mellon University GALA, the other of the two student run groups, faces many of the same problems. In the latest incident of campus hostility, a bomb threat was directed at the group during their biannual dance. Save for this incident, the campus community's negative attitude is not usually very visible. CMU seems to have fewer closeted faculty and staff members, though they are still the exception, not the norm. Going into its third year as an officially recognized CMU organization, they have shown that they have a firm foundation, but only recently have they begun to become established in the campus eye.

We could not contact some of the other local colleges such as Point Park, Carlow, or the Art Institute, and as far as we know there are no lesbian/gay student organizations at any of them. It would be ridiculous to think that there are no lesbians or gays at these places, but it is not hard to see why groups at these colleges don't exist.

The same repression and seeming lack of solidarity that has plagued the Pittsburgh lesbian and gay community for so long has permeated college walls. Oppressive administrations continue to frown upon gay and lesbian students, and deny them their rights. At the University of Pittsburgh, the struggle is still going on to have sexual preference added to the university's non-discrimination policy. Duquesne University, according to students we spoke to there, denies that they even have a gay and lesbian population. What we have is not an open atmosphere for social change and learning, but simply a scaled down version of what is happening to lesbians and gays throughout Pittsburgh and the rest of the country.

'RAID' from pg. 3

lesbian/gay community, including CRY OUT!, The Pittsburgh March Committee, and the Gertrude Stein Political Club, and also from Marion Demmick of the ACLU, Jeanne Clark and JoAnne Herman, both candidates for state office with solid records in sup-

port of gay rights, and John Pushinsky, democratic chairperson of the 14th ward, who informed council that he would use their response to this issue as a "litmus test" when they came to him for endorsement at election time.

Representatives of the neighborhoods involved with the "problem bar" squad spoke in support of the raid, but in the course of their testimony and questions from councilmembers, it became apparent that no one was sure how Travelers came to be defined as a problem bar, since there are no neighbors to be bothered, and that there was no very clear conception of what a so-called "problem bar" was. Pat Scanlon, to laughter from the crowd, made a plea to excuse the "excess of zeal" that "may have been used" during the raid, but for the most part those testifying made an effort to separate the issue of the raid on Travelers itself from the abuse of the patrons during the raid. All acknowledged the right of the state and city to raid a bar; at issue were the attendant harassment, abuse, and gay-bashing.

After the testimony, Council was extremely sympathetic, expressed their appreciation for those who took the risk of testifying, and Pollock made a formal apology. It is very likely that sometime in the next couple of months a city ordinance protecting gays from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations will be passed by Council. This bodes well for a city in which, several years ago, the whole question of gay civil rights was far too controversial for a council member to touch. Change means taking risks and making an effort, but if it can happen here, it can happen anywhere.

'COMMUNITY' from pg. 4

oppression is justifiable, any oppression can be justified.

Beyond these somewhat high-minded reasons for the separation of our communities, however, is a much more basic sexism that cuts both ways. It does not build community for me to hear the same jokes and slurs against women coming from gay men that I hear from straight

con't on pg. 8



## Books:

### ***And the Band Played On***

*Reviewed by Ted Hoover*

While reading *And the Band Played On*, Randy Shilts' book about the first five years of the AIDS epidemic, a remark Arthur Bell made about the dazzling cinematic epic, "Can't Stop the Music" kept running through my mind: this is a gay movie for straight people. No, I amend that, this is a stupid gay movie for stupid straight people. That just about sums up how I feel about this book except I can't imagine a straight person stupid enough to fall for this pathetic book. ("Jeep" is excluded by virtue of his illiteracy.) Shilts displays such nauseatingly obvious amounts of ego, self-justification, schizophrenia, and self-hatred he could make Mrs. Bates look like Dr. Joyce Brothers.

I assure you that no one is more surprised than I am. His first book, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, was a provoking and absorbing account of the life and death of Harvey Milk. *And the Band Played On*, however, is Shilts' 600 page apology to middle-class America and its sensibilities, a lengthy and tiresome attempt to distance himself from the gay community.

The bulk of the book takes place from 1980 through 1985, beginning with the first cases of AIDS in New York and ending with Rock Hudson's death. Via an endless number of short vignettes, few lasting more than a page, Shilts traces the personal, medical, political, social and scientific aspects of the epidemic. The form of the book is a huge diary of the AIDS crisis, its brief, juxtaposed entries culled from an enormous number of sources.

But oh, if only it were that simple. One would think that the horror of AIDS and this country's criminal mishandling of it would be compelling enough to warrant a straightforward recounting. But every page, each sentence, is informed by Shilts' subjectivity. There are a number of good points to the book, but these are all but obliterated by his hypocrisy, biased ranting and ravings, limitless proseletyzing and smarmy self-congratulation. Almost immediately, Shilts divides the world into two cate-

con't on pg. 9

## BOOKS:

### ***The Politics of Reality: essays in feminist theory* by Marilyn Frye.**

Crossing Press, 1983. \$8.95.

*rev. by Cindy Hoffman*

This is a book for conversation, a book to stimulate dialogue, an opening up of issues and not the final word on them. As a lesbian philosopher, Frye brings a radical presence to feminist theory and is able, with her lesbian eye, to see in a way which liberal feminism often cannot. She is sometimes testy, sometimes witty, sometimes sly or angry, but always engaging to think along with.

Since these essays were first published in 1983 and many were written earlier, they cannot be read as the latest word on feminist theory, but they are an excellent introduction to some of the most basic issues in our lives as women, particularly lesbian women, in a political world. Her project is to analyze some of the conceptual frameworks which structure our lives and affect how we think, speak, and act. She offers candid and thought-provoking discussions of "oppression" (can men really be "oppressed" by sexism too?), "sexis" and "sex-marking" ("this is the single topic on which we most frequently receive information from others throughout our entire lives"), "phallism" ("It wouldn't hurt to ponder the question of why there has been no name for such a common and such a potent thing as this"), and women's anger ("Attention is turned not to what we are angry about, but to the project of calming us down..."). She has a gift for holding up a very common topic and showing it to us in the slightly different light that will make us alternately sit back in our seats, startled by the obviousness of something previously overlooked, or stand up to protest and argue. Throughout, she raises provocative questions about racial and heterosexual bias in the culture in a manner which is both serious and scholarly, yet very readable.

Of particular value in this collection is her ability to articulate the unique rule of gay people and especially the lesbian in a misogynist culture. Her essay on separatism bravely tackles an issue which makes

almost everyone feel defensive, and her analysis of the tension between lesbian feminists and the gay rights movement is recommended reading for gay men trying to understand the very different issue of being a lesbian as opposed to a gay man. Frye's final essay, however, is in some ways the keystone to her thinking, as she calls for a new way of imagining women and men and the relationship between them. To Frye, the lesbian is "dangerous" to our culture and for that reason has been made "invisible", "impossible" even, by the culture precisely because the lesbian is in her very being a contradiction to misogyny. In a culture which is devoted to the overlooking and overseeing of women, Frye suggests that

"Lesbians are women-seers...with that there is the dawn of choice, and it opens out over the whole world of women...When one is suspected of seeing women, one is spat summarily out of reality... If you ask what became of such a woman, you may be told she became a lesbian, and if you try to find out what a lesbian is, you will be told there is no such thing. But there is."

Yes, there is, and Frye's essays help reconstruct a world in which we may become part of our culture's "reality."

## Video:

### ***Sammy and Rosie Get Laid***

*reviewed by Richard Cummings*

"Sammy and Rosie Get Laid" is the newest film from Stephen Frears and Hanif Kureishi, the team that made "My Beautiful Launderette." Sammy and Rosie is a much more interesting film, and in fact, I don't think I've ever seen a film as liberated and provocative. It is a great mixture of sexual and social politics, but it lacks the necessary cohesiveness that would have made this a powerful political statement.

There is an abundance of rich and diverse characters in the film and it is to Frears' and Kureishi's credit that neither the stories nor the eight prominent characters become confusing to the viewer. These eight characters are paired into four interracial couples, three straight and one lesbian. The lesbian couple appear to be the happiest, but they, too, are

con't on pg. 11



nized by how they spend. It also shows how arthritic is the invisible hand of capitalism when it comes to building a gay identity, a gay community, and political unity.

Because we are separate by virtue of our sexuality, we are, in the mainstream consciousness, somehow more about sex than they are. Even in many liberal straight minds, our civil rights interests are not classified with the civil rights of women and minorities, but rather with the private liberties of pornographers and their customers. Like so much of heterosexual psychosis, this aspect has afflicted many gay minds, and the point obviously hasn't been lost on gay merchants. Why is male sexual imagery (pornography at Travelers, photos and drawings of nude and semi-nude men scattered around everywhere) always appropriate in gay social settings? Why is stupid, unimaginative male pornography reviewed in our magazines?

The problem is not that casual, recreational sex became a part of gay male culture, but that its merchantability has placed undue emphasis on it, to our cultural and political detriment. The fact that it is aimed at the male patrons certainly must make the women feel like hangers-on and gate crashers. It compromises us politically because when sex becomes objectified, it becomes a more genuinely private issue, if only because it's more trivial. When gay people see their sexuality as a private, mostly sexual thing ("it's nobody's business who I go to bed with"), society's edict that they keep quiet about it (or else) doesn't seem so oppressive, and the state is not considered intrusive until it starts to legislate against the sexual act itself. If the very idea of long-term relationships is not a large part of our cultural self-image, we are not likely to concern ourselves with our inequitable treatment in housing, credit, insurance, and adoption, nor more informal oppression like harassment of publicly affectionate gay people since these issues affect gay couples more often than they do singles. A man at the Crossover recently told me that straight men are more oppressed than gay men because they can't get laid as effortlessly as we can.

Obviously, we do have a primary need for places where we can meet each other for romance and sex and it is undoubtedly out of this need that the commercial gay scene arose. But due to our disaffiliation, we also need simply to be together, since we are never entirely free of our sense of oppression in most mixed environments, as anyone who has ever camped it up in a greasy spoon or held hands in a movie theater knows. Most bar patrons are aware that this is one reason they go out. However, it is a need that is fulfilled accidentally, if at all, since sex and alcohol are so much more merchantable than a sense of community, and both catalyze a certain amount of divisiveness. Those who are sociable and physically attractive are much more likely to feel welcome than those who are shy and physically undistinguished. Older gay men are virtual pariahs in Pittsburgh's gay bars - unwelcome because they are sexually unattractive to most of us and because they provoke contemplation on our own eventual sexual obsolescence and the excommunication that goes with it.

An apologist for the commercialization of our culture might argue that businessmen must deal with the world as it is, not as it should or could be; that while a lot can be said for egalitarian idealism, it won't get you on the cover of Forbes nor into the Tavern Guild. It is, after all, not the businessman's fault that women and blacks make less money than white closeted males. It's not their fault that sex and booze are more merchandisable than a sense of community. It's not their fault the most affluent customers of gay culture seem to demand the least from it. It's not their fault that our high rate of chemical dependency (1 in 3 by the most conservative estimates) is their greatest insurance against bankruptcy. It's not their fault that we are oppressed by others and by ourselves and that there is money in it.

Because the merchants have alleviated our oppression somewhat, and taken some lumps for it, they are likely to see themselves as comrades (or "sisters" as Lucky calls them) in our struggle and several of their patrons are likely to be even more deluded on this point than they are. Ad-

mittedly, their interests and the larger interests of the gay community intersect - certainly, the raid on Traveler's was as much a threat to business as it was to civil rights - but they are not the same. We must not forget that with regard to our merchants we are simply out of the fire and into the pan, which is an improvement but certainly not the end of the journey. Admittedly, no gay business people are completely indifferent to us except as customers. However, their insulation from the difficulties that most of us face sets limits on their political and social commitment. Further, some of them have keen memories of a time when there weren't even lousy bars to go to, and they would be hard-pressed to understand how they, simply by following exigencies that grow out of American inequality and sexual repression, are oppressors in their own right.

The onus of improvement is largely on the nonprofit social and political sectors of the gay community since it is here where the rules are set by ideals, not bottom lines. Unfortunately, they're not doing a very good job. No doubt this is largely due to their lack of a solid and large volunteer base, but it is also because they are indentured to the merchants, and this keeps them from adopting an appropriately competitive stance. Both the political and social groups are dependent on the merchants for financial support and also for getting access to a large gay audience when they want to promote something. Should the GLCC ever attempt to do any scene-stealing they might find an increasingly cold shoulder in the commercial sector that helps to sustain it. Political groups that point an accusing finger at the merchants, and in particular certain recent profiteering (charging through the nose for printing, requiring groups to hand out Connection cards in exchange for donations, affixing ads for 976 numbers to CRY OUT! flyers without authorization) will likely not get access to the normal channels for fund-raising and communications: the bars and *OUT* magazine. But these difficulties highlight the very reason why they must be confronted and overcome: our "sisterhood" with the business people is one-sided and largely bogus.

con't on pg. 9



men ("fish"), and I have likewise heard lesbians use the word "fag-got" with an intonation closer to that used around a medieval bonfire than that used in a spirit of sisterly affection. Perhaps the crude jokes and disparaging remarks from both men and women grow out of some defensiveness about our love for our own kind, as if we have to justify, or can only love our own sex by proving that the other is distasteful. Or perhaps it is nothing more than the same fear of difference that motivates white to despise blacks, men to despise women, and homophobic culture to hate gays. The basis for all these fears of difference seems to be uneasiness with who we are. But we do ourselves no favors by despising those whose bodies differ from ours, and instead participate in our culture's gender war that produces oppression and fear. Both gay men and lesbians must invent ways to think about gender that will keep us free from the expectations and stereotypes that soon become a straight-jacket. We must find ways to support one another, and there must be public manifestations of this. As long as the institutions of the gay world perpetuate our separation, no number of personal friendships will break it down.

The gay community, then, is an elusive community, and in the face of our various differences it is a phrase which sometimes appears to be more wishful (or at least optimistic) thinking than it is an actual name for anything existing. Perhaps we ask too much of ourselves to think that we should be able to transcend differences like race, class, age, and gender with which our culture as a whole has been unable to cope. But still, as people who are defined by and discriminated against because of our "difference", we ought in any case to be accepting of difference in others. Otherwise, our thinking is precisely that of the homophobes, and all that prevents us from being equally oppressive is that we lack the power to be.

Particularly in the matter of gender differences, we must reimagine the relationship between the sexes and honor both the masculine and feminine, regardless of where we are on the continuum, and regardless of which we desire, if we are ever to be free to love ourselves.

---

### Captain Neon and the Invisible Faeries

It was unusual to see a familiar face Sunday morning on the 71C. I smiled and greeted Jim Guppio. His eyes grew wide with terror as he recoiled in his seat. As I hesitantly slid in beside him, he nervously scanned the other passengers over his shoulder. After exchanging a few curt pleasantries, I asked him if he'd heard about the raid on Traveler's.

He jumped up in his seat. "Shh-hhhh..." He surveyed the bus once more.

The few people riding the bus weren't near us, but I took the hint. I changed the subject. "So where are you headed?"

"Work."

"Where do you work?"

"I can't tell you. I'll explain after we get off the bus." He turned to stare out the window.

I had the uneasy feeling I'd stumbled into a bad spy novel. We rode into town in silence.

Once off the bus, Jim relaxed a bit. "Sorry about that, but I've got to be careful. You never know who might overhear. They've started talking about HIV testing at work. I'd be put out on my ass if they found out I'm gay. I'm still on probation. I'm trying to keep a low profile. I don't even go to the bars much anymore."

I sympathized. "It's terrible to live in fear. That's what was so great about the Traveler's demonstration at the City/County Building. We stood up and let Pittsburgh know we're not going to cower in closets anymore."

Jim screwed up his face. "No...-thank...you. All that publicity and confrontation. It just makes it harder for people like me who want to mind their own business. I've got a good job, a comfortable life. As long as I don't flaunt it nobody gives a shit if I'm gay."

"So you like going around acting like you're 007?"

"I'm real tired of people like you. I've got a lot to lose. This isn't Boston or Washington, DC. This is Pittsburgh. Christ, I've lived here my entire life. You guys who run-away to a big city where no one knows you can strut around like big shit but you don't know anything about it. Here it's like a small town. Very ethnic. Very conservative. If I come out, my whole family comes out with me, all their friends would know. I'm not that selfish."

"Listen, I've lived here all my life too. It may not be easy being open, but what's the alternative. You can't change anything if you're invisible. There's not enough room in a closet to build a new society."

"I do my part. I give money. If I lost my job I couldn't do that. Anyway, most people who walk around flashing like pink neon signs do it just for the attention. They're just a bunch of spotlight queens."

"They've got the same fears as you; it's just their priorities are different. You think it was easy demonstrating with TV and newspaper cameras everywhere? Somebody's got to stick his neck out. We can't depend on the benevolence of the hetero majority. Their AIDS apathy cleared up any doubt of that."

Jim shook his finger in my face. "People who are openly gay are either self-employed, work for a gay business, or are college students living away from home. A school teacher or an accountant doesn't have the same luxury. It's the people who don't have anything to lose who make the most noise and mess things up for the rest of us."

"Bullshit. Everybody has something to lose. But just imagine if all the invisible faeries who only materialize at night in the bars would appear in a local Gay Pride March. The hetero shockwaves would reverberate everywhere. Think of all the allies we might gain—our moms and dads, brothers and sisters, friends and co-workers. Gays wouldn't be those mysterious and frightening 'others' anymore; we'd be the people they know and like and care about."

"It'll never happen. The key word is 'might'. There's no guaran-

con't on pg. 11



'BAND' from pg. 6

gories: Us and Them. His "us" group is made up almost entirely of straight doctors, scientists, and middle management government types. "Them" includes anyone who doesn't follow his terribly noble and achingly soul-searched world view. It is doubtful that Shilts has ever forgotten a slight or insult visited upon him, and he seems to use this book to seek vengeance.

A list of just a few of the people upon whom Shilts grinds his axe would include gay political leaders (unless they're good-looking or nationally famous), people who follow gay leaders (with the exception of the above qualifications), New Yorkers, journalists, and the government (unless they're friends of his and have lots of medical initials after their name). Page after page, Shilts sifts through the facts and chooses to illuminate those that shed the worst light on his enemies.

Shilts never misses a chance to take a back-handed swipe at a member of the enemy camp and in the process this childish peevishness trivial-

izes the epidemic. He is at his eloquent worst on the issue of gay bathhouses. A few years ago, Shilts threw in with various straight community leaders and closed the three remaining San Francisco bathhouses. Shilts was mercilessly decried as a gay Uncle Tom in almost every gay newspaper in the country. Shilts never mentions his role, or the response he garnered, referring to himself coyly in the third person as a "San Francisco reporter." But he evinces no such reticence in regard to the bathhouses or those who own or visit them. The issue is highly volatile and I'm not about to defend them, but his shrill condemnation of the Tubs, which continues unabated for 450 pages, is aggravating in the extreme. And making the baths the central issue is ludicrous and homophobic. Anyone who questions his belief that the baths are the de facto cause of AIDS is vilified in his strident path toward self-vindication. He doesn't just say the baths are unhealthy, he refers to them as "Sexual 7-11's" (three times), "biological cesspools for infection," and in a breathtaking

display of literary overkill, "virtual Federal Reserve banks for massive semen deposition."

Shilts is equally biased in his portrayals of gay leaders (the ones who attacked him years ago). They are portrayed as a bunch of bickering, vainglorious children. Not one can do anything right. He berates the Federal government for not having a comprehensive AIDS policy, yet belittles gay leaders for taking time to hammer one out from a community famous for diversity and divisiveness. When they finally move toward action, Shilts condemns them for that too. Last year, after Pres. Reagan uttered his first words in seven years on the crisis, and then only to recommend "routine testing," a protest was called for the next day in front of the White House. Shilts blithely writes "...the protest had been organized by a handful of national gay leaders who wanted to put photographs of themselves being arrested on Pennsylvania Avenue in their fundraising brochures." This must be why Shilts

con't on pg. 10

'WHERE' from pg.7

Too many of the nonprofit groups have acquiesced in the artificial gay identity that has emerged from the bar scene. The greatest consequence of this is a community that has no idea how big and diverse it really is. Political groups and social groups that think they have reached gay Pittsburgh after leafletting the bars and putting a press release in *OUT* magazine are kidding themselves if they take no account of the thousands who are completely or partially detached from the commercial circuit. They are, however, reaching a group of which a significant number see no real reason for improvement. This might be why they often complain that their efforts are underpatronized. It's unlikely, for instance, that the GLCC will attract much patronage to a "nonthreatening social alternative" by advertising it at Zack's or in the *OUT* schedule of events. Further, others who are simply bored (make that bored, bored, bored BORED!;) might simply be

put off by the condescending, therapeutic tone ("nonthreatening" and its cousin "support group" are stock phrases) that the nonprofit sector too often takes. Certainly, a lot of us want support groups and counseling, but really hot social functions that compete directly with the bar scene (like perhaps a BYOB warehouse party with a cheap cover and inexpensive soft drinks) would not go amiss and might generate some revenue without strings attached to it. Some of us, after all, might resent being considered a client population, when all we are is sick of our lack of viable social alternatives.

Our dependence on the merchants is largely of our own making and thus largely in our control. A step in the right direction would be to wean ourselves away from them by investigating other channels for entertainment, fund-raising, and advertising. The Steel City Softball League is, surprisingly, one of the most progressive gay organizations in the city in this respect. It competes in mixed leagues, arranges fund-

raisers independent of the bars (skating parties at the Ardmore palace, for example), routinely negotiates with outside businesses for sponsorships, and is laudably attempting to enlarge the gay social identity in a non-service oriented context. Other organizations would be wise to follow their lead, and in fact, do them one better, especially in the way of promotion. There are for instance, a number of ways gay groups can advertise themselves outside of the bars and *OUT*. There is *In Pittsburgh* there are numerous neighborhood publications that will take our advertising, and there are the buses, which are compelled by law (since they are publically subsidised) to accept advertising, so long as it is not obscene. We should remember that money talks, that not everyone out there is an enemy, and that a number of philanthropic businesspeople (who don't run businesses that capitalize on our oppression) are out there to be tapped into.

What this ultimately boils down

con't on pg. 10



'WHERE' from pg. 9

to is, to borrow Anita Bryant's phrase, "recruitment." Of course, contrary to Anita's spiel, you can't make a person gay. But you can assist gay people in becoming more involved socially, politically, sexually and affectionally in the gay community. I know a man here who came out when he was sixty (I met him at the Upstage of all places) and I can't help but wonder if he would have stayed closeted that long in a city where the gay community is visible, has a number of worthy social options, and has enough self-respect to be politically active. After all the straight-dominated establishment spends an inordinate amount of time making heterosexuals feel wonderful about their sexuality while attempting to make us feel horrible about ours. It seems we have some obligation to deliver a counter message, not simply to dampen that repulsive heterosexual self-satisfaction, but also to reach gay people wrestling with their sexuality and those who are simply ambivalent about its value or significance.

It's a shame that our community is known publicly more through the AIDS Task Force and Persad Center than through anything else. Those organizations have, of course made an enormous contribution to this city and to the gay community. But it is fairly obvious that Kerry Stoner and Randy Forrester have been readily embraced by the Pittsburgh establishment as spokesmen for the gay community because of their association with gay problems. There is nothing dearer to the homophobic liberal's heart than our pain. It's so mollifying. It may seem ridiculous, but should Nancy Prebich ever decide to go really public on behalf of the Softball League and Dan Pollastrini for the Community Center, they are likely to become the most provocative gay people in the city simply because they would be representing gay health, happiness, and pride. They are also likely to see their membership swell, and this would be the most important result, since it would mean more money, more people, and decreased dependence on the merchants.

Active members of the gay community have to stop thinking about

how to make their message palatable to straights before we've even won over our own. It's likely that the more threatening we are to the homophobes, the more appealing we are to other gay people.

---

'BAND' from pg. 9

chose not to take part in this protest; he already had pictures of himself closing the baths.

The upper levels of the Centers for Disease Control, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, the Department of Health and Human Services and the higher echelons of the Reagan administration, oddly enough, are spared this great Shiltsian wrath. It's true that he does criticize them for their lack of co-ordination, funding and initiative. The point is made continually that agencies thwarted desperately needed research, but Shilts just chalks this up to so much bumbling. His bottom line seems to be: "They mean well, but oh, that pesky bureaucratic red tape. It just slows up everything." He never pursues the issue, never questions just why all those grant proposals sat, unread, on all those desks. After the first few times this happens, you begin to realize that something a bit more than governmental neglect is going on. After 600 pages of consistently refused funding requests, it is abundantly clear to even the dimmest mind that the Reagan inaction is a sin of commission rather than omission. But not to our intrepid newshound Randy Shilts. He's far too busy screaming about the sexuality of gay men to understand the difference between governmental complacency and complicity. For eight years, Reagan has sat in a corner playing president while 30,000 Americans have died. Shilts chooses, instead, to attack PWA's because he doesn't understand why they don't like being called victims. (315)

Somewhere in the middle of the book you begin to realize that what you're reading is, in actuality, a love story. Shilts has fallen head over heels for the medical and scientific communities in general and one Dr. Don Francis in particular—the lengths to which he will not go to please them in this valentine of

a book! Shilts doesn't merely repeat what all these dedicated, sincere, sincere, concerned and tireless knights in white lab coats tell him, he climbs into their fevered heads and attempts to make their wearying struggle real for us, we unfortunate lay people not lucky enough to have intimate knowledge of these paragons. Especially the ubiquitous Dr. Francis (or "Dr. Donny" as Shilts might whisper to his pillow every night). Reading this book, only the depraved and heartless would fail to be moved by Francis' ceaseless battle fighting the entrenched bureaucracy of the government while ignoring the slings and arrows of outrageous insults tossed from those sex-starved, money-grubbing political types. Chapter after deathless chapter we come to see the tormented anguish Francis endures. His poor wife, alas!, his two children, alack! are all but neglected while Daddy works his fingers to their weary bones trying to cure this nasty, dirty disease. But Dr. Donny's life isn't all work—no, no, no, he takes time out to enjoy a soiree at Lenny Bernstein's, where, in this room crowded with kvetching gay men, even playwright Larry Kramer "Can't help but develop a minor crush on Don Francis. He was awfully cute." Then again, Shilts is nothing if not fickle, and would drop dead before finding fault with any doctor or scientist. Among his beloved we find Dr. Kevin Cahill, whose interest, Shilts notes, "in AIDS [is credited] to an ethical posture derived from his serious commitment to Catholicism." (Apparently, things have changed since I left the Church.) Shilts is also sweet on Drs. James Curren, Edward Brandt, and James Mason. The latter, a member of the Mormon hierarchy, is described by Shilts as having "an ingrained American sensibility about fairness." (Really? How many Americans have died from AIDS in the last eight years?) Brandt "closes the [AIDS] session with a citation from his favorite book, the Bible: "This too shall pass." Never mind that Curren, along with the other two, all headed, at one time or another, the very agencies that refused to grant monies for AIDS research, prevention, or education. And in fact,

con't on pg. 11



'BAND' from pg. 10

all three were repeatedly called before Congress to explain this shameful lack of funding. All, repeatedly and under oath, lied and said that no more money was needed. And all this while the death and infection rate continued to climb. Never mind about all that because Shilts doesn't. He continually writes that the three, even as they were lying, secretly agreed with the accusations heaped upon them by Reps. Henry Waxman and Ted Weiss. In Shilts' twisted brain, the three doctors are somehow more noble and heroic for spouting the government's lies than the two reps are for pursuing the truth. The country's largest AIDS effort, New York's Gay Men's Health Crisis, with no funding from any government source was, two years into the epidemic, coordinating 3 million dollars worth of services and education with nothing except volunteers. But the self-oppressing Shilts has the gall to write "For all the funding problems...scientists clearly had responded more swiftly than *any other* (emphasis added) challenged by the AIDS epidemic." (p. 418)

I wonder how much the collective salaries of Brandt, Curren, Francis, and Mason would amount to? I suggest adding on the royalties Shilts will amass from this stupid book and donating them to GMHC or AmFAR, since neither receives public money.

Not only is this book stupid, it's dangerous too. I doubt if anyone not directly involved in the fight against AIDS would come away thinking that gays didn't have a great deal to do with their own destruction and that the government really tried to do more but couldn't only because of all that bothersome paperwork. There's no mention of the Hartwick vs. Bowers Supreme Court decision. There's just a passing reference to the fact that lesbians (otherwise unmentioned in the book) have very few cases of AIDS, or that 21 million heterosexuals are infected with the herpes simplex II virus. This is a very comfortable book for the majority of Americans who get their news from Dan Rather and their exposure to gay life from Dynasty.

The book's deficiencies are aggravated by Shilts' horrendous prose

style. It's needlessly florid at times (when was the last time you came across the word "Sisyphean" twice in one book?), and maddeningly cliched elsewhere. (If you removed the phrases "media watchdog" and "tip of the iceberg" from this book you'd be left with a pamphlet.) The author in this, as he calls it, "work of journalism" constantly embellishes his story with fictive touches that could not possibly be true. (He goes much further than adding "she thought," or "he felt" and reconstructs scenes with information he could not possibly know. This reaches its apex in a 1983 lunch between two men of which Shilts writes: "Gary speared a spinach pasta curl and watched it slip around." Unless Shilts was working as a waiter there at the time, I defy him to prove how he came by this newsy detail. Countless fabrications such as these litter the book. And the whole thing, as a result, reads like the novelization of the movie of the epidemic.

This is the most dangerous book I have ever read. Shilts, working his own hateful agenda, plays into the hateful hands of the ruling classes. This book will undoubtedly be source material for years to come. If you can read through the lines of his self-oppressing homophobia, there is a wealth of necessary information here about the government's deliberate plans to let gay men die. That Shilts has used the epidemic to get back at others, blame the victim, pacify middle America and curry favor with the power elite shocks, saddens and surprises me. That Shilts has recently sold the rights of this book to the networks for a miniseries at an undisclosed amount of money doesn't surprise me at all.

'NEON' from pg. 8

tee they'd accept us. The catch is that as long as they discriminate against us, most of us will remain invisible. It's safer. Yet social change is measured in risk taken. We have to be willing to sacrifice, even to suffer."

"Yeah, and what would I gain? Unemployment? Social ostracism? Rejection by my family? The chance to be beaten to a pulp by a fag basher?"

"Just what is it you've got to lose? The right to silent acquiescence? To lead a double life? To live in fear of exposure? To deny your self? To be denied your civil rights? To be ignored and discounted?"

Jim angrily turned and walked away. As he made his way down Smithfield Street, he grew smaller and smaller and smaller until he seemed to disappear completely.

'LAID' from pg. 6

criticized by Kureishi. The major characters are: Sammy and Rosie, Rafi (Sammy's father), Alice (Rafi's old flame), and Danny, a young black man who befriends Rafi in order to get closer to Rosie.

The plot revolves around Rafi, who left Sammy as a child and returned to his homeland. As a cabinet minister he oversaw the torture and murder of political dissidents. Fearing for his life, Rafi returns to London, a city he views as the center of civilization. He expects to pick up his life where he ended it. What Rafi finds is a city torn apart by racial violence and poverty. His vision of England clashes with the realities of a modern world where violence is a way of life, sexual freedom is a norm and baby-making is not a priority. This conflict is clearly illustrated in Rafi's relations with Alice. He views her as the epitome of English gentility, a woman who conforms to his ideas on the role of women in society. She has loved him for twenty years, waited for him and, upon his return, accepts him back into her life.

Alice's view of him changes, however, when, after an evening of sex, he appears to be bored with her. As she states later in the film, there was "barely a blink between the time you opened your eyes and the tube (subway) door closing." She realizes that she means nothing to him but a bit of fun. As the apparitions from his past close in and he is involved in a street fight, Rafi returns to Alice. She dutifully tends to his wounds, but when he asks to move in with her, she exposes his hypocrisy and pretense. In a last desperate attempt to maintain his illusions, he seeks out Danny,

con't on pg. 12



'LAID' from pg. 11

"the only person who has shown me any human kindness" since his return to London. When this last refuge is also invaded, Rafi knows that he is defeated; he realizes that he can't escape his past. Haunted by guilt and surrounded by violence, he has no choice but to succumb to it.

The other major story concerns the conflict between Sammy and Rosie. Rosie is a social worker and feminist who can't stand two things: "getting dinner on and sexual fidelity." Sammy is more conventional; he has affairs, but all he really wants is Rosie (all to himself), a house in the suburbs and children. He tolerates Rosie's behavior, but his eyes show his hurt and anger. When Rafi offers him money on the stipulation that he produce grandchildren and buy a house, Sammy grabs the opportunity to fulfill his goal. Rosie is outraged. She views Rafi as a murderer and his money as tainted with the blood of innocent people. Politically, they are very different people and the film never resolves this seemingly insurmountable difference. Kureishi does not have the guts to let his characters develop naturally and live their own lives. He imposes on them a banal, conventional ending.

The film is filled with superb performances. Claire Bloom gives a luminous, moving performance as Alice. When she opens her front door and sees Rafi for the first time in years, her reaction is confused and awkward. Later, as she talks about her feelings when Rafi left her, the pain and hurt are apparent in her eyes. When she calls Rafi on the carpet for his hypocrisy, she grows into a politically aware woman. Her transformation is gratifying.

Shashi Kapoor, India's most famous actor, is Rafi, another character who is transformed during the course of the film; however, his is one of self-destruction. Kapoor etches an unforgettable portrait of an old world politician who can justify anything as long as it serves his purposes. Ayub Khan Din plays Sammy only adequately, but he is hot and a lot of fun to watch. Frances Barber is a warm and witty Rosie. She smiles slyly whenever Rafi questions her about

her lesbian friends. She enjoys agitating him and it shows in her face. She exudes so much sensuality that it is understandable how she takes lovers so readily and why Sammy is so jealous. The biggest revelation of the film is, however, Roland Gift of the Fine Young Cannibals. He's a sweet and sexy, slightly menacing and altogether appealing. Sammy and Rosie Get Laid is a movie that needs to be seen more than once. It is being released on video this month.

---

## GLCC CALENDAR

**ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS:** Weekly

Monday, 8pm at GLCC.

Friday, 8pm at Friends' Meeting House

Support Group for lesbian, gay & bisexual adults from dysfunctional families: alcoholism, emotional illness, compulsive disorders, etc.

**BAR TOUR:** Monthly

New to the city, just coming out or simply prefer not to go to the bar alone? The Bar Tour provides a friendly, supportive way to become acquainted with Pittsburgh's lesbian and gay nightlife. Tour meets at GLCC, 8pm. Participants get acquainted and are given the night's itinerary. Transportation for the tour is available. A valid ID is required. Call 243-GLCC for reservations.

**GLCC BOARD MEETING:** Monthly

1st Wednesday, May 4 & June 4, 8-11pm

**COFFEEHOUSE (The Social Alternative):** Monthly

Monthly social gathering for lesbians and gays held at the First Unitarian Church in Shadyside, corner of Morewood and Ellsworth Ave. (NOT AFFILIATED WITH

**THE CHURCH.)**  
Good food, good company, and live entertainment. Admission: \$2; All you can eat dinner: \$5 (includes admission but not beverage.)

**GAY 20's:** Bimonthly

May 9 & 23 and June 13 & 27, 8pm at Friends' Meeting House

Social support group for lesbian, gay & bisexual adults, 21-30. Meets the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month.

**GROWING ALTERNATIVE YOUTH:** Weekly

Saturdays, 2pm. Social support group for gays and lesbians under 21.

**MEN OVER 30:** Bimonthly

May 12 & 26 and June 13 & 27, 8pm. Social support group. First hour is a discussion, second hour, a social with refreshments. Meets 2nd and 4th Thursdays.

**OUTDOORS CLUB:** Monthly, 8pm.

First Tuesday after the first Monday (May 23)

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings held at the GAY AND LESBIAN COMMUNITY CENTER: Suite 212, 800 Wood St., Wilkinsburg.

**FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE:** 4836 Ellsworth Ave., Oakland.

• CRY OUT! first Tuesday of every month, 7:30pm at Friends' Meeting House. Call 481-4226 for more information.

• Pittsburgh Men's Collective: Every Tuesday, 7:30pm at offices of Second Step, 794 Penn Ave. in Wilkinsburg. For more information, call: 243-7658 or 421-6405

• Pittsburgh March Committee / Gay Pride Week - P.O. Box 81011, Pgh, PA 15217

• GLOW - Gays & Lesbians out of the Woodwork - a network

con't on pg. 13



'CALENDAR' from pg. 12  
of gays in the community. Write  
P.O. Box 22144, Pgh, PA, 15222.

• The Lavender Letter of Harrisburg, PA is sponsoring a women's Writing Contest. Deadline for submissions is May 31. \$100 to best short story, \$50 for best poem. For rules, send SASE to Poetry/Writing Contest, P.O. Box 1527, Harrisburg, PA, 17105

• Women United in Recovery - Oakland women's center 4pm, 3rd Saturday of every month. Other support groups meet at various times.

• AIDS FUNDING DEMONSTRATION. On May 10, a "funeral procession" will travel from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg to protest the state's lack of funding for AIDS. The demonstration will begin at 12:00pm in Harrisburg and will involve some street

theatre and later, lobbying with legislators. Contact Rick Austill at 244-1394.

• Women Gathering: a social and support group, meeting at the Oakland Women's Center, 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm. Call 243-4522 for more information.

Contributors to this issue of *Keystone Queer*:

Carl Fongheiser, Tamara Fraser, Cindy Hoffman, Ted Hoover, David Kyle, Mike McFadden, Trina Pundurs, Dave Stewart

KQD is staffed and funded entirely by volunteers. We welcome anyone interested in helping to gather information, writing articles, lay-out, art work, business affairs, etc. If you have ideas for this journal, time to give, or simply want to support our effort, write to us at the address below.

SUBSCRIBE TO KQD

You may subscribe to the next 6 issues of the Keystone Queer Dispatch by sending \$6 and your address to KQD, P.O. Box 22182 Pittsburgh, PA, 15222.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The 'K.Q.D.' reserves all rights to articles printed herein.