

Community resource: EAnn Hinds

by Michael Murphy

E. Ann Hinds is the consummate artist. Drawing is perhaps her most developed medium, though she recently unveiled her skill at painting in a one-woman show. ("Painting is a sensuous experience — almost, but not quite as fun as eating," says Ann.) She tried her hand, quite successfully, at set-design in the Portland Women's Theatre Company production of Jane Chambers' play *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove*, and makes her acting debut in their current run of *My Blue Heaven*.

How does Ann characterize herself? "I'm a Lesbian first, then an artist, and then an activist. I like anything that's got act in it. I think that's why I changed from doing set design in *Bluefish Cove* to being an actor in this production — it sounded like something I could do that would keep me moving instead of just sitting around thinking up visions."

Ann moved to Portland two years ago with her partner of six years, Linda Kliewer, after a brief stay in San Francisco, which proved "too big and too overwhelming." Shortly after her arrival, Ann became actively involved in the organization of the 1982's Lesbian and Gay Pride; an experience she describes as "collective community management." For 1983's Pride Celebration, Ann was instrumental in putting together the All Queer Art Show (AQUA), a showcase for Lesbian and Gay artists in the community.



photo by Linda Kliewer

Ann, the activist, describes her political credo as "making choices and taking responsibility for those choices." Among her concerns are racism, particularly its manifestation in the Lesbian and Gay community, and the oppression of fat people. A self-

proclaimed "radically, fat dyke," Ann is involved in a group of women who are addressing the issue of this oppression; an oppression that Ann says has been "... a major one that has operated more strongly and for a longer period than oppression for my Lesbianism."

A Spirituality Circle is another of Ann's many group ventures, this particular one being a group of four who meet periodically to explore various techniques of connecting

body and soul. Ann describes her spiritual work as "integrating myself; letting the facets of my personality work as a collective instead of as a hierarchy, which means taking power away from my conscious, verbal person."

And Ann the artist? "I think of art as therapy. It is the process of creating that is the art to me, and the product or the medium is secondary." You might say that Ann is a renegade artist. "I don't like being told that there are 'right' ways. That's probably why I'm queer. I resist and resent anyone, or society as a whole, putting out that kind of intimidation."

"Theatre combines it all," is Ann's latest realization. Her experience with the Portland Women's Theatre Company has been "... a chance to have art as therapy, not only for myself, but for anyone who wants to get involved. There is an avenue for everyone to cooperate, to work together collectively, and to understand decision-making by consensus. It provides such an incredible range of opportunities within one structure, and women do all the work! Ultimately I see a theatre company as a vehicle for realizing visions and translating political perspectives into action."

The whole E. Ann Hinds: Artistic, Political and Spiritual. Don't miss her latest "coming out" in *My Blue Heaven!*



Chanukah

At nightfall on December 1 begins the Jewish festival of Chanukah. On the first night one candle is lit, on the next night two candles are lit, and so on until eight candles blaze on the last night. Let me quote at length from *The Complete Story of Chanukah* by Nisan Mindel for the historical basis of the holiday.

More than 2000 years ago there was a time when the land of Israel was part of the Syrian Empire, dominated by Syrian rulers of the dynasty of the Seleucidae.

In order to relate the story that led up to Chanukah, we shall start with Antiochus III, the King of Syria. He had waged war with King Ptolemy of Egypt over the possession of the Land of Israel. Antiochus III was victorious and the Land of Israel was annexed to his empire. At the beginning of his reign he was

favorably disposed toward the Jews and accorded them some privileges. Later on, however, when he was beaten by the Romans and compelled to pay heavy taxes, the burden fell upon the various peoples of his Empire who were forced to furnish the heavy gold that was imposed upon him by the Romans. When Antiochus died, his son, Seleucus IV, took over, and further oppressed the Jews.

Added to the troubles from the outside were the grave perils that threatened Judaism from within. The influence of the Hellenists (people who accepted idol-worship and the Syrian way of life) was increasing. Jochanan, the High Priest, foresaw the danger to Judaism from the penetration of Syrian influence into Palestine. For, as against the idea of outward beauty which the Syrians idolized, Judaism emphasizes the idea of truth and moral purity, as commanded by G-d in the holy Torah. The Jewish people could never give up their faith in G-d and accept the idol-worship of the Syrians and Greeks. Jochanan was therefore opposed to any attempt on the part of the Jewish Hellenists to introduce Greek and Syrian customs into the land.

Desiring to unify his kingdom through the medium of a common religion and culture, Antiochus tried to root out the individualism of the Jews by suppressing all the Jewish customs. He removed the orthodox and righteous High Priest, Jochanan, from the Temple in Jerusalem, and in his place installed his brother Joshua who loved to call himself by the Greek name of Jason, for he was a member of the Hellenist party. He used his high office to spread more and more of the Greek customs among the priests.

Antiochus was at that time engaged in a successful war against Egypt. But messen-

gers from Rome arrived and commanded him to stop the war. He had to yield and call it off. Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, a rumor spread that a serious accident befell Antiochus. Thinking that he was dead, the people rebelled against Menelaos. The treacherous High Priest fled together with his friends.

Antiochus returned from Egypt enraged by Roman interference with his ambitions. When he heard what had taken place in Jerusalem, he caused his army to fall upon the Jews. Thousands of Jews were killed. Thereupon, Antiochus enacted a series of harsh decrees against the Jews. Jewish worship was forbidden, the scrolls of the Law were confiscated and burned. Sabbath rest, circumcision and the dietary laws were prohibited under penalty of death.

One day the henchmen of Antiochus arrived in the village of Modin where Mattathias the old priest, lived. When the Syrian officer built an altar in the market place of the village and demanded of Mattathias to offer sacrifices to the Greek gods, he replied, "I, my sons and my brothers are determined to remain loyal to the covenant which our G-d made with our ancestors!"

Thereupon, a Hellenistic Jew approached the altar to offer a sacrifice. Mattathias grabbed his sword and killed him. His sons and friends fell upon the Syrian officers and men and killed many of them. Having chased the rest away, they destroyed the altar.

Before his death, Mattathias called his sons together and urged them to continue the fight in the defense of G-d's Torah. He asked them to follow the counsel of their brother Simeon the Wise, and in waging warfare their leader should be Judah the Strong. Judah was called "Maccabee," a word composed of

the initial letters of the four Hebrew words "Mi Komocho Bo'eilim Hashem," Who is like unto Thee, O G-d.

Antiochus sent his General Apolonius to wipe out Judah and his followers, the Maccabees. Though greater in number and in equipment than their adversaries, the Syrians were defeated by the Maccabees. Antiochus sent out another expedition which also was defeated. He realized that only by sending a powerful army could he hope to defeat Judah and his brave fighting men. An army consisting of more than 40,000 men swept the land under the leadership of two commanders, Nicanor and Gorgias. When Judah and his brothers heard of that, they exclaimed: "Let us fight unto death in defense of our souls and our Temple!" The people assembled in Mizpah, (where Samuel the prophet of old had offered prayers to G-d). After a series of battles the war was won.

Now the Maccabees returned to Jerusalem and liberated it. Entering the Temple they cleared it of the idols placed there by the Syrian vandals. Judah and his followers built a new altar and dedicated it on the twenty-fifth of the month of Kislev, in the year 3622.

The golden Menorah having been stolen by the Syrians, the maccabees made one of cheaper metal. When they wanted to light it they found only a small cruse of pure olive oil with the seal of the High Priest Jochanan on it. It was sufficient to light only for one day. By a miracle of G-d, it continued to burn for eight days, till new oil was made available. That miracle proved that G-d had again taken His people under His protection. In memory of this, our sages appointed these eight days for annual thanksgiving and for lighting candles.