

Community center opens in Roseburg area

Fifteen years and three gay/lesbian community centers later, Billy Russo believes there is no limit to what we can do when we work together.

BY BILLY RUSSO

It was over 15 years ago that I first heard of a "community center" for gays and lesbians. I was hanging out in my favorite drag bar when a "hippy-type" approached me with a flyer (longhairs didn't frequent Manhattan drag bars in those days). The flyer was an invitation to volunteer at The Firehouse. It gave a Wooster Street address in the downtown industrial area. I stuffed the flyer in my pocket and went on dancing and drinking.

During the following week I paid The Firehouse a visit. It turned out to be an ancient four story horse-drawn hook 'n' ladder firehouse, complete with indoor stables. It was staffed by an all-volunteer group called the Gay Activist Alliance. I volunteered almost every Saturday over the next 18 months.

In the fall of 1972 I drifted out of the City. I visited the Gay Center in Detroit for two weeks and eventually made my way to Los Angeles. Using one of my last quarters, I bought a copy of the *L.A. Free Press*. Turning to the personals, I found a listing for the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center (GLCSC).

This center occupied an old Edwardian mansion near downtown. During the four years I volunteered there, we eventually acquired the two adjoining mansions and finally bought a motel complex closer to Hollywood. Besides staffing one of the first-ever 24 hour gay and lesbian switchboards, GLCSC housed the first gay men's health clinic, employment program, women's program and many other services for the homophile community.

During September of this year MCC Roseburg, with the cooperation of G.A.I.A., opened its community center. It is a bold effort by a small group who want to breathe new life into the local community. The 2,000 square foot Grange-style building, complete with parking, is located five miles south of Roseburg on Carnes Road. It is staffed from one to six p.m., Monday through Friday.

The community center houses the hundreds of newsletters, flyers and announcements that come through the GALA, MCC and the Archival Project's post office boxes. It also contains a wide variety of AIDS information and serves as a meeting place as well. Besides GALA and



The Roseburg Report

MCC, NOW and a small non-gay spiritual group use the facilities, and there is talk of a youth group forming.

As Director of our little Center, and in an effort to develop it into an on-going project, I am applying what I've learned working at The Firehouse, GLCSC and Roseburg's GALA. With other volunteers I intend to establish programs that will serve our community: peer counseling, minority affairs, prison/parole/probation, health, archival, etc. — there's no limit to what we can do, working together.

Presently, a dozen men and women are volunteering their time to staff the community center; however, more volunteers are needed. Also — more importantly — program coordinators are needed. I have all I can do to keep up with the routine tasks necessary to get this project off the ground. I need help coordinating the programs that will add substance to this project, and I am optimistic that volunteers will come forth.

If you would like to keep informed of our work here, please subscribe to our monthly newsletter, *Gay Ol' Times*: write GALA, P.O. Box 813, Roseburg, Oregon 97470 or call the community center at (503) 679-9144. The newsletter is distributed *free of charge*.



Over 35 years of service to our neighbors.

Frank Warrens
Automotive & Marine Services Inc.

Our complete
automotive repairs &
Service on
ALL Domestic & Imports.

228-6607
50 NW 20th



VETERAN DRIVER OWNED



"COURTEOUS PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS"
PASSENGER SERVICES
DELIVERY SERVICE

PORTLAND - BEAVERTON - GRESHAM - MILWAUKIE - TIGARD
OVER 100 CABS AS CLOSE AS YOUR PHONE
LICENSED FOR TRIPS ANYWHERE - SIGHTSEEING TOURS
STATION WAGONS UPON REQUEST

PACKAGES - PARCELS - ENVELOPES - GENERAL COMMODITIES

24 HOURS 7 DAYS BONDED COURIERS
9 PASSENGER BUSES AVAILABLE

NO WEIGHT LIMIT • JUMPER CABLE SERVICE

FAST COURTEOUS SERVICE
CALL

227-1212



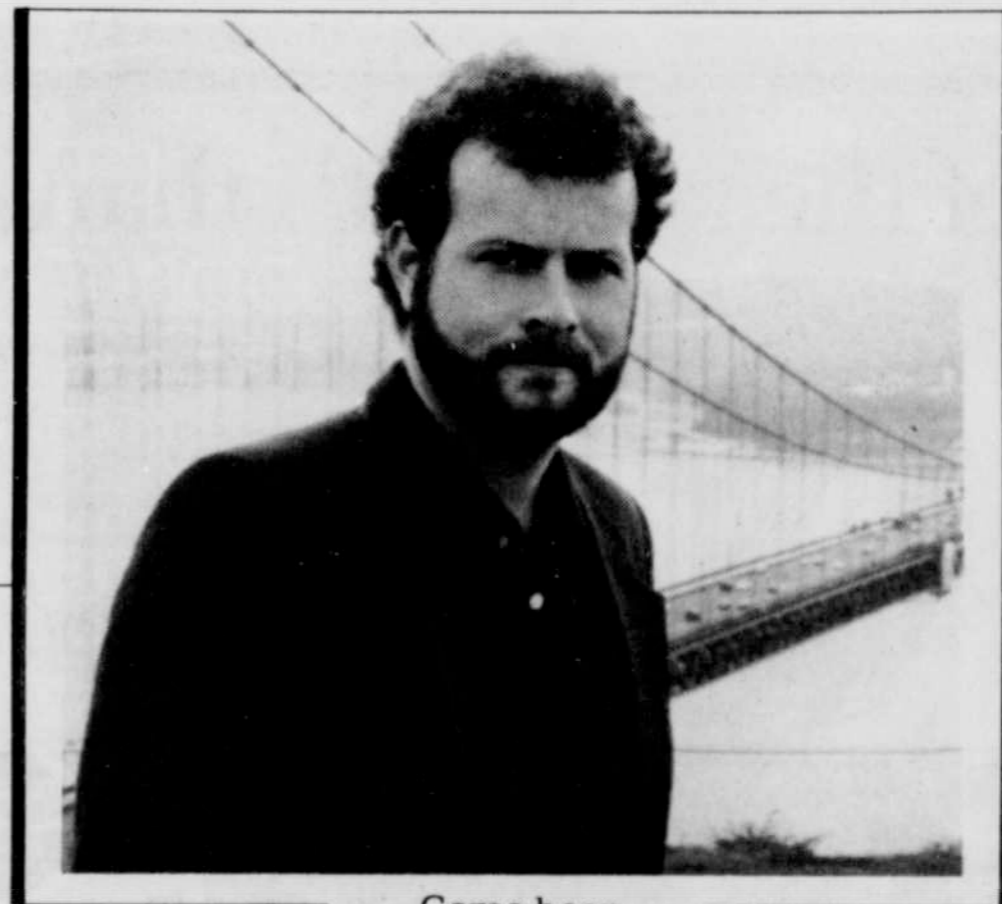
*... few things in life
renew us so often
as the art
we live with.*



CARTER
ARCAND
Gallery

1318 Northwest 23rd Avenue
Open Tuesday-Saturday,
Noon-Five
or by appointment

503-274-0121



Come hear
RANDY SHILTS

author of

**AND THE BAND PLAYED ON:
Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic**

(St. Martin's Press, 1987)

"The book stands as a . . . reminder of the shameful injustice inflicted on this nation by the institutions in which we put our trust" — *Publisher's Weekly*

First Congregational Church
1126 SW Park

November 18th, 7:30 p.m.

Tickets \$7.50 available at all Powell's bookstores

Sponsored by Willamette Week and Powell's Bookstore.
Benefit for Oregon AIDS Task Force Long Term Care Fund.

Shilts' book is available for \$24.95 at Powell's Bookstore,
10th & W. Burnside, Cascade Plaza