

## Queers and tears

Four days in October will remain the high point of my life. Imagine, if you will, being in a city and knowing that almost everyone you saw in the crowded streets, subways, shops, restaurants, museums — that people everywhere — were either gay or lesbian. Imagine strangers stopping in the streets and actually *talking* to each other. Imagine same-sex couples walking hand in hand or with their arms about each other — being publicly affectionate with each other — everywhere you happened to be.

And then imagine 800,000 people gathered in one place rooting for your side. I wept with joy. I would even venture to say that I had what some people might call a religious experience. I had been validated as a human being.

Those four days were immeasurably enhanced by the hospitality of Michael Young and Chris Venable, whom I had not met before I arrived on their doorstep, luggage in hand, on Friday evening. Michael and Chris live in a small apartment near DuPont Circle.

Michael grew up in a suburb of D.C.; Chris emigrated East from Idaho about ten years ago. Michael and Chris have been lovers for seven years. They are painters and just last summer both completed courses of study in art.

D.C. is a wonderful place, especially if, when experiencing it for the first time, one is lucky enough to have a homegrown artist for a guide. There is art everywhere: buildings dating back almost two hundred years, fountains and statues on almost every street corner, museums, historical buildings, art galleries. I kept my new friends busy answering my unceasing questions. Washington, D.C. became a real place for me and thanks to Michael and Chris it will remain a loving place.

Michael and Chris are gay artists who follow in a tradition as old as time which proclaims and



**Jay Brown**  
Co-Publisher/Editor

Senior member of the *JO* staff (in more ways than one), Jay's political activism began with opposition to fellow Arizonan Barry Goldwater in 1964. Homophobes and hypocrites are his bane.

celebrates love between men. I count myself privileged to have been their guest for those four marvelous days.

## Sickening business

Last month, in a cynical mood, I questioned whether the power structure in Washington, D.C., could ignore hundreds of thousands of lesbians and gays invading their turf for the march on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Well, my cynicism was pale, indeed, when compared to the cynicism exhibited on October 14, by 94 members of the U.S. Senate. (See Just News.)

Under the guidance of arch-homophobe Jesse Helms, Republican, South Carolina), the political "leaders" of this nation contemptuously delivered a resounding

slap of dismissal to the gay/lesbian civil rights movement. The vote on the Helms amendment could not have been more perfectly timed.

On October 11, more than 800,000 people had assembled in the Capitol Mall to demand equal protections under the Constitution of the United States.

On October 13, more than 600 people had been arrested at the Supreme Court for protesting religiously inspired, institutionalized homophobia.

The 94 senators, including our so-called "liberal friends," did not just turn their backs. They shouted, loud and clear, "You make us sick!"

What makes me sick, however, is the knowledge that any person — gay or straight — would financially support such ignorance and bigotry.

## Feeding the mouth that bites you.

Closer to home, the Oregon Republican Party appears to be firmly in the clutches of a woodpile offspring of North Carolina's cretinous senior senator. News that Gov. Neil Goldschmidt was about to sign his promised executive order elicited a barrage of mental-midget rhetoric from the mouth of T.J. Bailey, Chairman of the Republican Party of Oregon.

T.J. Bailey speaks for the Oregon Republican Party and that means he speaks for gay and lesbian members of the Republican Party. For more than six months Bailey has been using his office to publicly demean and discredit hundreds of thousands of residents of this state.

Here's a reminder, then, to gays and lesbians (especially) who might be thinking of making a contribution to the Republican Party: You are putting *your* money where T.J. Bailey's mouth is.

## Banking on civil rights

The goals are:

- Enactment of legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, public accommodations and education.
- Defeat attempts to impose unjustified measures that abridge civil liberties with respect to the AIDS epidemic.
- Conduct an active public education program on the importance of civil liberties.
- Defeat efforts to inject religion into the public schools.
- Provide more protection against invasion of privacy by collection and dissemination of information of a personal nature, particularly with regard to the rapid expansion of high technology in the interconnection of computer data bases.

"There are so many things we might do. We have chosen goals in areas where we think we can make the biggest difference. Success on these goals will help to make Oregon a place where everyone feels safe and, indeed, welcome

to be themselves — to be the best kind of person they can be. That, after all, is what civil liberties are all about — helping to ensure that our communities are places where everyone understands that acceptance of differences among people is good for all of us."

**Tony Biglan**  
President, ACLU of Oregon

Since its founding in 1920, the ACLU has protected individuals' civil liberties including their freedoms of expression, association, religion and privacy. In the past two years, the ACLU of Oregon has spearheaded the fight to enact legislation prohibiting discrimination against gays and lesbians. The ACLU continues to uphold and preserve the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights for *all* individuals.

The strength of the ACLU comes from its numbers. The ACLU of Oregon needs *you*. Gays and lesbians are noted for supporting their friends. The ACLU is, indeed, the friend of lesbians and gays.

A basic membership to the ACLU of Oregon is \$20 for an individual, \$30 for a joint membership. Send a check to ACLU of Oregon, 705 Board of Trade Building, 310 SW 4th Ave., Portland, OR 97204. You'll be glad you did.

## AIDS Awareness: Homophobia, denial and death.

October was AIDS Awareness Month. On October 2, a group of educators and care providers gathered, under the auspices of the Centers for Disease Control, to discuss local efforts in the battle against AIDS. To the surprise of no one, the pervasive topic in the discussion was homophobia.

"There has never been a more political disease," observed Tia Plympton. "If we had the support of the highest office in the land, our job would be so much more comprehensive and efficient."

"The big stumbling block is internalized homophobia," Scott Ekblad said.

"Those at highest risk have the highest degree of denial," Casey Finnegan remarked.

In several instances, participants observed that many people perceive death as preferable to accepting that they may be at risk to exposure to HIV.

Elizabeth Waters said that IV drug users have defiantly declared, "I can't get AIDS, I'm not gay."

Homophobia. Ignorance. Fear. AIDS Awareness? Only in America.

## Priorities

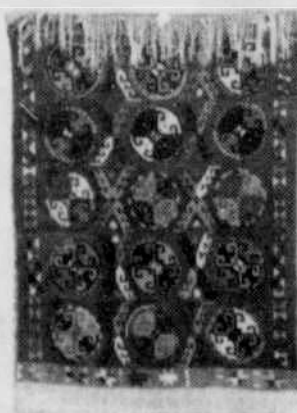
Two days after the stock market takes a plunge, the President of the United States names a commission to study the problem, but more than five years have passed since AIDS was recognized as a virulent new disease and the President has yet to tackle the problem in a responsible manner.



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