



blazing star



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BIG YEAR FOR GAY POLITICS

by Chris Riddiough

Election time is upon us again. Since Thanksgiving, people have been announcing their candidacies for various public offices. This year Chicagoans will go to the polls to elect officials to county, state and national offices, and it will be an important year for gay people. Since the anti-gay and other right wing campaigns of 1977, public attention is more focussed on gay rights than ever before. And this year we in Illinois have one openly gay candidate for the state legislature.

Let's look at that race. In November, 1977, Gary Nepon, 28, announced his candidacy for state representative in the 13th district (the area along the lake shore from about Fullerton to Belmont). Nepon also stated that he is gay, becoming the first openly gay candidate for state office in Illinois history. The district Nepon is running in is a traditionally independent, liberal one which has a heavily gay population. The present representatives (Houlihan - D, O'Brien - D, and Sandquist - R) are all sponsors of gay rights bills in the legislature.

Nepon is a native Chicagoan; this is his first venture into electoral politics, although he has had political ambitions for some time. After some political work in his youth, Nepon put aside his ambitions when he came out. He participated in some gay rights activities around the Anita Bryant campaign; then, after much soul-searching (he felt that he would not be an effective candidate if he had to be in the closet), his political inclinations were reawakened. He decided last fall that the time was right for an openly gay candidate, and he also felt that it is important for gay people to participate fully in the political process.

Nepon has been taking independent, progressive stands on the issues. He is, of course, strongly in support of gay rights and vows to do what he can to insure the passage of those bills. He has stated that his is a human rights campaign and beyond the question of gay rights, he has also taken a firm stand in favor of the ERA and abortion rights. He also decries the lack of proper funding and programming for schools and child welfare agencies. Nepon is particularly adamant about nuclear power in any form; he speaks out forcefully against the use of nuclear energy and the danger of nuclear waste.

Nepon's candidacy raises many questions for the gay community. The first of these is the relationship between the gay community and an openly gay candidate. As the only openly gay candidate, Nepon or others in his position will be looked to by non-gays as spokespeople for the gay community. This implies a responsibility on the part of the candidate to be accountable to the community, yet there are no real mechanisms for this.

Second is the question of the stand which a candidate takes on the issues. Just being gay is not enough to insure that a candidate will adequately represent the gay community. It is more and more apparent that gay rights is closely linked to other human rights, especially women's rights. Other issues - health, environment, labor, are equally important.

In relation to this, and of importance in Nepon's case, is the question of choosing between an untested gay candidate and a tested non-gay one. Both Houlihan and Nepon are independents and take similar stands on the issues; Houlihan has been in the legislature and has shown his sup-



News item: Research team finds 14 percent of female seagulls off California coast are homosexuals.

NO BUOYS FOR THESE GULLS!

by Torie Osborn

Ornithologist George Hunt could hardly believe it. But after double-checking his findings, he concluded that, yes, folks, up to 16% of the seagulls on Santa Barbara Island, 43 miles off of Los Angeles, are lesbians.

The gay gulls seem to represent a new phenomenon - only two examples of lesbianism among the gull population were spotted before 1968. Dr. Hunt's findings indicate that 150 of the island's 1200 pairs of gulls live a domestic dyke lifestyle.

One of the results of Dr. Hunt's research caused quite a stir: there was found to be little difference between 'straight' and gay gulls. Scientists were extremely puzzled about the origin of this recent lesbianism. A hypothesis that it was due to hormone imbalance was scrapped when it was discovered that all the females, both gay and straight, had at least as much of the male sex hormone testosterone as the island's male gulls.

Just goes to show you - we ARE everywhere!!

★★★★

port for gay rights, though he is not gay. In such an instance, whom should one support? It is clear that at some point the gay community must have gay representation, not just pro-gay representatives.

(continued on page 2)

LP Feminist
Serial
Am
B645

12/24/79

Let's Get These Boycotts Clear!

Many groups are asking people to boycott different products in order to support the rights of the group. In order to help everyone keep aware of the status of these boycotts, BLAZING STAR will be printing a summary of boycotts that are presently in effect. Additions or corrections should be sent to us.

<u>Boycott</u>	<u>Organizing Group</u>	<u>Reason for Boycott</u>	<u>For More Info.</u>
Florida citrus	Gay and Lesbian Coalition	Gay rights	GLCMC P.O. Box 11493 Ch'go, 60611
J.P. Stevens	Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union	Workers' rights to organize	ACTWU, 333 S. Ashland, Ch'go, 60607
Gallo Wine, non-union lettuce and grapes	United Farmworkers	Farmworkers' rights	UFW, 1300 S. Wabash, Ch'go 60605
Coors Beer	AFL-CIO and various gay groups	Workers' rights	NAM, 3244 N. Clark, Ch'go 57
Nestle's products	INFACT	Stop use of inferior products in Third World	INFACT, 1701 University Ave., Mpls., MN 55414
States that have not passed the ERA	N.O.W.	Help pass ERA	N.O.W., 53 W. Jackson, Ch'go 60604

GAY POLITICS (continued from page one)

As we come up to the primary in March, we should watch what happens closely. The outcome of the 13th district race could have far-reaching effects on Chicago gay people. We need also to keep in mind that other races could also have important effects. Pro-gay candidates are running in the 12th and the 17th. Ellis Levin in the 12th has gay rights activists on his campaign staff and has been a supporter of gay rights in the legislature. In the 17th, incumbent Mike Holewinski and senatorial candidate Paul Magnus both are gay rights supporters and the most progressive candidates on other issues as well.

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In February, Alderperson Clifford Kelley (D - 20th Ward) will reintroduce a gay rights bill to the Chicago city council. The bill is an amendment to the city's municipal code and would ban discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual preference. Kelley has introduced such a bill several times before, but in each case the bill has died in committee. He is hopeful that this time there will be more support and the bill will reach the city council floor. Kelley has indicated that letters expressing support for the bill would be helpful; they should be sent to city council members and to the Mayor.

★★★★

REMEMBER!! FEBRUARY 15TH IS SUSAN B. ANTHONY'S BIRTHDAY.

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Editorial:

Lesbian Rights at the Houston IWY Conference

by Torie Osborn

Most of you have by now read or heard about the Houston International Women's Year Conference in late November, 1977. Let's reflect on what that gathering was -- and was not.

It was supposed to underscore what media commentators have been saying for years: that the women's movement is dead, choked by its narrowness of constituency and vision.

It was supposed to provide the public with a good old-fashioned hen-fight, pitting the right-wing "pro-family" forces led by anti-ERA activist Phyllis Schlafly against the notorious "women's libbers" in a shrill display of female in-fighting.

But the Houston conference must have disappointed the hundreds of media people who flocked to Texas to catch the last flailing gasp of feminism. For what emerged, or rather burst forth, from Houston with unremitting intensity over the four days of the conference was an unprecedented amount of political unity, forward-looking energy and commitment, and competence on the part of the 2000 delegates and 18,000 observers -- the most diverse group of people ever assembled at a political convention in this country's history.

While Schlafly's people retreated to a smaller and almost ignored "counter-convention" marked by a singular lack of substance and raw, right-wing rhetoric and name-calling, the IWY delegates studied and hashed out a massive 25-point "National Plan of Action" calling for basic governmental policy changes in a huge range of areas affecting women.

The conference delegates -- described as a "rainbow of women" -- were white, black, yellow, Hispanic and Indian -- and even 4 were Eskimo. They were rich and poor, represented labor unions and the unorganized, radical and conservative.

Perhaps the single most critical political victory of the conference was the linking together of lesbian rights with the more traditional feminist demands for the ERA and abortion reform. The demand for lesbian rights arose from no less than 36 local state conferences (only 10 were needed to place an issue on the floor) and quickly became the most controversial conference topic. In the wake of the year's strong anti-gay campaigns led by Anita Bryant, people feared that damage would be done to the movement for the ERA by connecting it with lesbianism. But it was clear at Houston that the strong lesbian presence in the women's movement was no longer going to be allowed to be ignored, and even

more conservative feminists rallied around the issue in the interests of unity. Perhaps the most emotional moment of the weekend came when the lesbian rights issue passed with the same majority as the other key issues. Lesbians, caucusing at the rear of the convention hall, linked arms and shouted together "Thank you, sisters," and released thousands of multi-colored balloons proclaiming "We are everywhere!"

The Houston conference has been accused by some feminists of being politically powerless because it was sponsored by the government. But the grass-roots organizing for lesbian rights' inclusion as a basic, central demand, and for a decent, relevant minority women's platform confirms that the women there used the government-sponsored forum to our own advantage. Under the glaring spotlight of public and media scrutiny, thousands of women proved that feminism is alive and well, and that it is NOT simply a white, middle-class, special-interest movement. The Houston conference also showed that the women's movement has grown in scope and self-confidence to the point where that old albatross

"Mommy, when I grow up, can I be a lesbian?"

If you think this idea is shocking ... read what the IWY is proposing for your children.

Two thousand women will meet in Houston this week at the International Women's Year Conference to vote on proposals that ... by law must be presented to the President and the Congress as a blueprint for future legislation.

Many of these proposals, if passed by the Congress, will dramatically and permanently change the American way of life.

For example, their proposals to legalize homosexuality would allow insured homosexuals custody of children, thus creating homosexual role-models for susceptible children.

In addition, it would lead to the legalization of homosexual marriages and the adoption of children by these homosexual couples.

This proposal also calls for the passage of Federal laws which would make it legal to refuse to hire homosexuals to teach in our schools.

Further, their proposals for passage of the E.R.A. Federally-funded abortions on demand and their system of Federal child care centers for all children would be equally destructive to the American family unit.

If you want to demonstrate to the President and to the Congress your disapproval of these proposals, plan to attend the nationally televised Pro-Family Rally this Saturday in the Astro-Arena.

PRO-FAMILY RALLY

PRO-FAMILY RALLY
Saturday, November 19th
1 - 3 pm
Free Admission
Astro-Arena

This advertisement paid for by the Pro-Family Coalition, Suzanne Thomas, public relations chairman.



The above half-page advertisement in the Houston Post and Houston Chronicle sponsored by the Pro-Family Rally greeted those arriving at the conference on Thursday, November 17.

of liberal feminism--lesbianism-- can now be proudly dealt with and integrated with more mainstream reforms.

This is no mean progress. But now it's up to all of us to keep working on an ongoing basis to provide the resolutions passed at Houston with actual force.

Next issue, BLAZING STAR will feature an interview with Kem Kemmerer, Chicago lesbian activist and officer of Chicago N.O.W. who attended the Houston Conference.

TO OUR READERS

Beginning this issue, BLAZING STAR will double its size. In order to finance this major expansion, we are now taking ads. If you are a business or individual who wants to help support Chicago's only lesbian newspaper, please contact us for ad rates. We offer display ads from 1/24 of a page for \$5 to full-page size for \$120.

We hope you all enjoy our new, improved, enlarged newspaper!!! Let us know what you think about it.

Sisterhood on the Silver

by Eileen Willenborg and Torie Osborn

Hollywood has rediscovered women. A bold new breed of female character has come forward with the release of "Julia" and "The Turning Point". The new heroines are strong women who do not play traditional, dependent roles--Hollywood's usual fare for actresses since the "women's" films of the 40s. In the old Hollywood movies, actresses with the stature of Katherine Hepburn, Joan Crawford, and Bette Davis provided us with examples of women portrayed in a positive, independent light. But what separates 1977's "Julia" and "The Turning Point" from those early films is that the women are the absolutely central characters, and their relationships with women friends are the central theme.

In the past, friendship between women in movies has been marked by back-biting, bitchiness, and betrayal; women's friends are forsaken for a man every time. But "Julia" and "The Turning Point" present friendships honestly. In "Julia", Jane Fonda plays the role of leftist playwright Lillian Hellman. The story, from Hellman's memoir *Pentimento*, tells of her long friendship since childhood with the aristocrat, Julia, played by Vanessa Redgrave. The two women did not have a physical relationship, but the emotional and spiritual bonds were unshakeable. This film begins with flashbacks to their childhood; Julia is the patient teacher and helper of the younger, less confident Lillian. In one scene of a hike together, Julia actually rescues a panicked Lilly who is unable to cross a log bridge spanning a deep ravine. Lilly's admiration for Julia over the years borders on heroine-worship. Julia returns Lilly's love, in part by her examples of courage, especially when she becomes a political activist against the rise of fascism. As adults, the two women's friendship endures long separations and lives that are centered in completely different worlds. Julia becomes a psychiatrist, studying in Vienna with Freud, and then forsakes her medical career to become a full-time politico, fighting Nazism. Lillian's own struggle is with her writing; the movie traces her rise to success as a playwright in New York.

The audience rarely sees Julia and Lillian together as adults; their adult relationship continues largely through correspondence. But their bond is the basis for the plot of the movie: Julia asks Lilly to smuggle \$50,000 into Germany to aid the resistance movement, and, despite the personal danger (Lillian is part Jewish), she agrees.

The most dramatic, intense scene in the movie takes place in a Berlin restaurant. Lilly has completed her mission and she has one hour with Julia before she must leave Germany. They haven't seen each other for several years. Julia has



"The Turning Point": rooftop confrontation

lost a leg at the hands of the Nazis and must walk on crutches. The once strong, athletic woman retains her composure, but the sight of her friend maimed is almost more than Lillian can bear. They tersely exchange facts about their lives, including that Julia has had a daughter named Lillian, but they can't express the feelings that are visibly overwhelming them. The time passes painfully quickly; they have to part with the crushing knowledge that their friendship will probably be terminated, not by their own actions, but by forces completely beyond their control.

The relationship presented in "Julia" is limited by the truth of the story behind it--that the two women rarely did see each other as adults. Their relationship is therefore marked by a child-like quality throughout, a purity and innocence. But it remains a strong and deep and memorable bond--never threatened with dissolution by the women themselves.

"The Turning Point", on the other hand, explores a friendship between two women that is in trouble. Anne Bancroft plays Emma, an aging prima ballerina who has devoted her entire life to her dancing career. Emma's closest rival and friend in the early years of her career is Deedee, played by Shirley MacLaine. The two young dancers competed for roles and stardom, but were also best friends until Deedee got pregnant. At that point, she was forced to make a decision: she had to choose between dance or marriage and starting a family. Emma counselled Deedee to have the child. Then, over the years, Emma achieves stardom while

Deedee becomes wife, mother and suburban dance instructor in Oklahoma City. She has a daughter (played by ballerine Leslie Browne) who is, at the film's opening, a budding star herself.

After a separation of over 15 years, the two women are reunited. Emma is a lonely and inwardly frightened woman. She realizes that her career will soon end and she fears the coming sterility of a forced retirement--alone. She envies Deedee's family-centered life, which she sees as rich and full of love.

Meanwhile, Deedee has secretly harbored ill feelings of resentment and jealousy toward Emma for all her married life. She has always suspected that Emma encouraged her to have her child so that the only serious rival for the role that made her career would fall by the wayside. She has wondered about her talents all those years, never knowing if she too could have become the dancer that Emma did had she made a different life decision.

While "Julia"'s dramatic plot--Lilly's dangerous mission behind enemy lines--frames the friendship between her and Julia, "The Turning Point"'s portrayal of the women's relationship is more internal, subjective. Deedee accompanies her daughter, Emilia, to New York to study with Emma's dance company and feels left out of the dance world her friend and her daughter share. She is also threatened by the development of a mixed teacher-student and mother-daughter relationship between Emma and Emilia. Deedee's summer in New York coincides with Emma's discovery that the dance

Screen ★★☆☆

company is putting her out to pasture; she will never star again.

The self-doubt and self-awareness brought about by these changes in their lives create incredibly tense scenes between the two women, culminating in one of the most powerful and emotion-packed scenes ever put on the screen.

It is a physical fight, on the night of Emma's bow and Emilia's debut. Emma and Deedee meet in a bar and begin to pour out their feelings of anger and resentment at each other. Each has private pain to exorcise, and the tension mounts as they attack each other verbally. Then, they run to the roof of Lincoln Center, and let go full force with fists and fingernails. Their evening gowns and jewelry almost tangle the scene up absurdly, but the depth of their anger transcends the ladylike trappings.

After pummeling each other drunkenly, the two women fall into each other's arms, laughing and recognizing their mutual love and respect. They see that each is not to blame for the other's failings: each did what she could with her

life, given society's restrictions. And they both see they can look forward to the possibility that Emilia--their daughter figure--can have a less fragmented life.

This sense of progress, future potential is what is best about this film (along with the magnificent ballet sequences). Although one

might wish that Deedee would leave her drippy husband and pirouette off into the sunset with Emma, the movie nevertheless strongly affirms women's friendship and loyalty in a new and positive way.

Both "Julia" and "The Turning Point" deserve a solid four blazing stars rating! Don't miss them.

Move over, Luke Skywalker!

On January 16, the NASA announced its selections for a new group of astronauts. For the first time the future space travelers from the U.S. were not all white men; they included six women, three black men and one Asian man. The crews are to be assigned to the 1980's space shuttle program. Many of the new astronauts had planned since childhood to go into the space program, although even a few years ago there seemed to be little hope that women and minorities would ever be chosen. However, the women would not be the first in space; in the 1960's the USSR sent Valentina Tereshkova into

space.

Why did NASA change its policy? One official said that it was due to NASA's "strong affirmative action program to get a variety of people from a wide spectrum of American society." Clearly, women and minorities had to apply a lot of pressure to prompt NASA to expand its recruitment policy. Even NASA officer Chris Kraft gave credit when he said, "In the last few years, because of the women's movement, frankly, more women have been qualified."

PHONE 929-0929

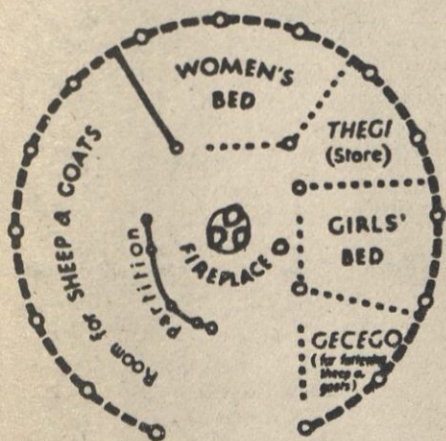
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Midwest Women's
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TOMBOYHOOD: When we were very young...

by Eileen Willenborg

Did you ever fight it out with the neighborhood bully? Did you think playing with dolls was boring? Was your mother threatened by your preference for jeans? (She had no idea how much your future preferences would threaten her!) Did grown-ups try to tell you that sports--and just about everything else in life that was exciting--were for boys, not little girls? Did you feel awkward and clumsy in dresses? But could you climb trees and walk on top of high fences with the agility of a mountain goat? If these questions have sparked any memories of similar childhood experiences, chances are you were a tomboy.

The Queens Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon defines "tomboy": "1. lesbian; 2. (camp) trying to appear masculine and menacing." It is not true that every tomboy grows up to be a lesbian. One thing that many lesbians have in common, though, is that many of us did not fit into the traditional sex-role stereotyping that society uses to define children. I certainly was not "sugar and spice and everything nice" ...but I wasn't exactly "snails, and nails and puppydog tails" either. I fell somewhere in the middle, the gray area of tomboyhood.

I cannot define the word; it is a state of mind. Sometimes it was confusing, being a girl who acted and played like a boy; other times it was painful, feeling inadequate because you didn't respond to your role as a little girl and there wasn't much support for your non-conformity. But as I think back on my years as a tomboy, I mostly laugh, because it was also a lot of fun and much more exciting than playing dress-ups or cut-outs!

From the tender age of three, I hated dresses more than anything else in the world. You couldn't run as fast, or slide into second, or go exploring in the woods as comfortably in a dress as you could in dungarees. When I started school my dislike became more intensified, mostly because of my love affair with the top cross-bar of the huge playground swing-set. Some older kids taught me the time-honored art of shinnying: climbing vertical poles using your legs and arms to pull yourself higher. It certainly was thrilling to sit atop the thirty foot cross bar, after the ascent, gazing out over the trees that surrounded the playground. The school officials weren't too pleased with us, but it was the favorite pastime of the more daring members of my class.

It was required that girls wear dresses, which I thought was a ridiculous rule. Dresses made it harder to shinny up and down the cold metal legs of the old swing set. Even if you could bear the discomfort of climbing the pole in

a dress, you were never assured of a tranquil meditation on top of the swing-set. Every time a girl in a dress climbed to the top, some smart-aleck boy was sure to come along and chant, "I see London, I see France, I see Eileen's underpants!" The prospect of seeing a girls' underpants--even if she were a notorious tomboy--soon brought a crowd of rowdy boys, who alternately gaped and guffawed.

Most would wait around for you to shinny down the pole in hopes of glancing more glimpses of your anatomy. Do you remember how much it hurt to shinny down with bare legs? With pants on you just wrapped your legs tightly around the pole and slid, fast and smooth. If you tried that in a dress the bare skin on your legs was pinched, pulled and sometimes burned. You had to open and close your legs as you lowered yourself bit by bit down the pole with your arms. Of course that sent the boys into fits of pre-pubescent ecstasy. They would also jeer about how clumsy girls were: they didn't even know the right way to shinny down a pole! Only other tomboys understood why I hated dresses so much.

★ ★ ★

When I was a child, being a tomboy meant wearing jeans and my father's old shirts, and doing things that were usually reserved for boys, or at least, not quite appropriate for girls.

I worked in the garden with my grandfather (as in this photograph when I was 9 or 10 years old); I did carpentry and other mechanical work with my father; I learned photography from my aunt; and I studied mechanical drawing in high school (where I was the only girl in my class, of course).

I read "boy's books" and played "boy's games" like cowboys and Indians, which shocked some of my family's friends--not because it wasn't nice for a girl to play with guns, but because our friends were pacifists and the guns were "war toys."

Twenty years later, I haven't changed much (except that, in spite of the war toys, I grew up to be a pacifist). I still wear jeans or overalls. My father and I now wear the same size in men's shirts, and he sometimes wears my hand-me-downs.

Elaine Wessel

Necesita personas para traducir artículos para nuestro periódico. Nos gustaría tener por lo menos una parte de este periódico en español. Tampien estamos interezados en artículos en español para "Blazing Star", especialmente de interes para la mujer latina y si es posible, tambien, al ingles.

Si quiere cooperar con la seccion en español de "Blazing Star" llame a 342-2398 o escriba a P.O. Box 7892.



THREE BLAZING STARLETS
IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS

★ ★ ★

A Guide to the Bars

In future issues BLAZING STAR plans to survey other women's and mixed bars in the Chicago area. This will be part of a continuing series that will explore different aspects of lesbian life in Chicago. Please send us your ideas for this series. We are also adding, as a regular feature, a guide to the bars in Chicago that are open to women. This includes two new bars: 'Tutsie Johnson's' and the 'Music Box'. A woman's symbol (♀) indicates that the bar is primarily a women's bar. If you have additions or corrections for this list, please contact BLAZING STAR.

Augie's ♀	3729 N. Halsted	929-0929
Big Red's	642 W. Diversey	525-1200
Butterfly	1437 N. Wells	337-9001
Center Stage	3730 N. Clark	935-2900
CK's ♀	1425 W. Diversey	871-2120
Closet	3325 N. Broadway	477-8533
His 'n' Hers	944 W. Addison	935-1210
Knight Out	2936 N. Clark	525-8150
Lost and Found ♀	2959 W. Irving Park	588-9446
Maryiln's ♀	430 N. Clark	337-8421
Music Box ♀	3735 N. Southport	528-1914
Patch ♀	201 155th St., Calumet City	891-9854
Petunia's ♀	2559 N. Southport	477-1336
Tutsie Johnson's ♀	2464 N. Clark	472-8164

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COMMUNITY NEWS

The Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Metropolitan Chicago, now over two years old, selected a new executive board for the organization. For the first time two co-chairs, a man and a woman were elected to insure sexual co-equality in leadership positions and to aid in establishing more continuity at the coalition meetings. Elected to these positions were Chris Riddiough of BLAZING STAR and Guy

Warner of the Mattachine Society. Filling-out the executive board are Delialah Kenney of QED (clerk), Ron O'Garra of the Rogers Park Gay Center (treasurer), Tom Peters of GAY LIFE (secretary), and Wilson Watt of Gay Professionals (parliamentarian). The coalition serves as a community forum and communication channel. Its current membership is 70 gay businesses and organizations.

Since the IWY Conference in Houston energy has been running high in lesbian communities across the country. For the first time, lesbianism has been recognized as a key issue in the liberation of all women.

In order to build on this energy a group of lesbians from California, New York and other states are calling for the formation of a national lesbian organization. Los Angeles lesbians will host a founding convention on March 17 through 19, for the purpose of exploring the possibility of such an organization.

One hundred representatives, selected according to geographic regions, will attend the Convention. Registration will be on a first come first served basis subject to the following criteria. All delegates will a) be lesbian feminists, b) have been visibly active in the Lesbian Movement, c) support the concept of some form of national lesbian organization, and intend to work in or with such an organization in their future political work, d) represent organizational diversity, e) send in their registration coupon and check (\$5.00) and receive an official confirmation letter. Additionally, to insure that this effort is a truly national one, representatives will be registered according to a regional quota system which is based on the relative amount of known lesbian activity in that area. It is projected that there will be a fall national conference open to all lesbians affiliated with the new organization.

AUGIE'S (continued from page 8)

facts for gay people. Now people in general are talking about gays--Bryant has brought a lot of attention to gay issues. It's also brought gay people more together than in the past.

Another cause of the new openness about gays, says Lynn, is changing music and dance styles. Cultural things do have an effect on our social ideas. With the move from 'romantic' music to disco, more straight and closeted people feel comfortable with being in gay oriented scenes. All of this has led to a new looseness about gay people. In the sixties the level of harassment was much higher and 'dykey' women were often arrested. Nowadays that doesn't happen. Lynn compared this opening up to the changing attitudes about interracial couples. A few years ago racially mixed couples were often harassed but now there is more openness in some neighborhoods.

Another aspect of this new openness, helped by the Bryant campaign, is that there is also more cooperation within the gay community. Lynn thinks that this should be reflected in the social scene as well. "After all we're all working against Anita Bryant; why can't we drink together and socialize together, too," she says. While Augie's will remain a women's bar, Lynn is open to gay men coming in.

Talking to Lynn gave us the expectation that the many positive traditions started by Olga will continue. People's appreciation of the role Olga and Augie's Club have played was testified to by the over 200 people who attended a roast in Olga's honor. Films of the event were made and will be available through Augie's later in the year. Over the years many people have had good times in Augie's, due largely to the hard work Olga has put into making the bar a club and community center. We look forward to more of the same in the future.

— Chris Riddiough

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Spotlight on the Bars: AUGIE'S

Bars tend to come and go, especially gay bars. The bars are an important fact of gay life, but they are too often unstable. Sometimes, however, a bar opens that develops a character and clientele all its own; it becomes a part of the gay community and remains after others have gone. One such bar is Augie's, located at 3729 N. Halsted. Augie's opened November 1, 1973 which makes it one of the longest lasting women's bars in Chicagoland. It has taken much of its personality from one of its founders, Olga Flannigan. She and her original partner, Donna, decided to open Augie's in order to provide a nice bar for women in Chicago. Donna left the partnership after two years. Olga stayed with the bar until November, 1977 when she sold it to one of her bartenders and manager, Lynn White.

To find out more about what this change means for the lesbian community, BLAZING STAR talked to Lynn. Our first question was whether there'd be any changes in the bar; Lynn replied that there were no immediate plans--the first step is to adjust to being a new bar owner, to let things settle in. Down the road further, there are plans for a name change and some changes in the decor. Augie's will have the same friendly atmosphere as before. When the bar first opened, Olga worked hard to make it a club. This has included sponsoring many parties, picnics and other activities. Throughout the last four years Augie's has been the site of many birthday parties as well as holiday celebrations. This tradition will continue as indicated by the various December holiday celebrations and the going away party in January for "Baby Donna". Augie's has also had performers--women musicians and singers--from time to time. And the atmosphere is one where camaraderie prevails; even the break-down of the juke box on New Year's Even didn't dampen people's spirits--everyone joined in a spontaneous sing-along that lasted until 3 a.m.

Another aspect of Augie's community orientation has been the sports teams. For several years the bar has sponsored softball and bowling and a few years ago, basketball. The softball and basketball teams play in Chicago Park District leagues in Northwest Side parks. They've always done well as the trophies decorating the bar show. Augie's 1976 softball team was the league champion and the '77 team missed repeating by only one run. Bowling teams (six) have a league at the Playdium on Thursday nights. All of these activities will continue.

We asked why the change in ownership was happening now. Lynn explained that she has intended to buy a bar for some time and that she was happy to get this one. Her work over two years as bartender and later manager at Augie's gave her the experience and opportunity to own the bar. Olga had decided to



New owner, Lynn, (left) with original owner Olga (right) at Augie's

photo by Laura Cuzzillo

move in other work directions and wanted to have more time to herself. With Lynn as the new owner, the bar continues in the tradition that Olga started. "Owning a bar makes many demands on your personal life," Lynn commented. "Suddenly you don't have time for dinner and a movie." Beyond the commitment of time that it takes to successfully operate a bar, there must be a special commitment from bartenders and owner. As Lynn says, "Being behind the bar you get involved in people's lives; in their ups and downs." An important person in helping Lynn set up the bar is her bartender, Bobbi. A longtime friend of Lynn's, she is bartender on weekends and has been a source of support in this transition period. Olga, too, has helped out, with Tuesday nights being "Augie's night" at the bar.

Given the kind of work that has to be put into a bar like Augie's, it's often difficult to be involved in other community activities, Lynn said, "I don't have time to attend meetings right now, but I support gay rights and will do my part through the bar." An example of this was the sale of buttons there in support of the Florida citrus boycott.

We talked about how the gay scene has changed over the last few years. The advent of gay politics has opened doors for people. Lynn commented that there weren't many ways to get support when she was coming out, but now almost every time you open a newspaper or turn on the TV there's something about gays on it. Lynn thinks that the Anita Bryant campaign has had some good side ef-

(continued on page 7)

BLAZING STAR: WHO WE ARE

BLAZING STAR is a newsletter for the lesbian community. As lesbians and bisexual women who are active in the women's movement, we want to educate all women about the oppression that people face because of their sexual preference. We also want to keep our sisters informed about local and national events that affect us. BLAZING STAR is produced by an all-women's chapter of the New American Movement. NAM is a socialist-feminist

organization of women and men throughout the United States. BLAZING STAR: Chicago Women's Chapter of NAM works on such projects as lesbian organizing and women's rights. We are working for the passage of gay rights legislation and the Equal Rights Amendment. Any woman who is interested in working with us on these projects is welcome to join us. Write BLAZING STAR, Post Office Box 7892, Chicago 60680; or leave a message for us at 342-2398.

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