

The Front Page

July 26 - Aug 15, 1983

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LETTERS: Complaints, Complaints, Complaints. . .

The AIDS Issue

Dear People:

I was glad to see the recent coverage given to AIDS; the same night I read your various articles (Dan Leonard's article, the fund-raiser in Charlotte), there was also an editorial page column in *The Chapel Hill Newspaper* comparing how most of the world is dealing with this in a way similar to the way it dealt with the plague many centuries ago.

So, I was quite surprised, indeed, angered, to read the comment about a letter about a local victim who is remaining nameless at the request of his family. I was assuming that the victim referred to is Hoagy Gaskins. I might be able to accept the fact that he himself might not have wanted any publicity about his death; however, if it is done at the request of his family, you have abdicated your position as a "newspaper," for by definition a newspaper prints news. The death of Hoagy is newsworthy in a gay publication for a few reasons. First, Hoagy was instrumental in getting the gay movement active in this part of the country. He had appeared in public, and in general lived an uncloseted life. Second, considering that Hoagy was also somewhat promiscuous (I had met him a few times at the local rest area, where we would stop to chat about life in general, gay politics in particular, and the current choice of men available at that hour), and there are not a few men who had contact with him when he might have been contagious, if indeed AIDS is contagious, then others might wish to know they had been "exposed" to AIDS.

To have one's straight family come along and then decide they don't want his name published is beyond the rights of that family. To give in to straight values and standards, and to manage the news, lessens the impact of the *Front Page* as the state/regional gay newspaper that I had assumed it to be.

Sincerely,
Faygele benMiriam

Dear Faygele:

Frankly, I agree with you. However, there was no person better qualified to write the AIDS piece than Dan Leonard, and he felt obliged to honor a promise he had given the man's family. Rather than simply withholding the name, however, we made it clear that a name was being withheld — and there is a difference.

— Editor

Dear Front Page Editors:

I read with great interest your survey on Medical Care. I was eager to fill it out and send it in, then I discovered that since I live outside the North Carolina area I was not able to do so.

Someone has a great idea going. We need to be able to get help when we need it. Our health is nothing to toy with. Not only would I like to keep my money going to gay businesses and doctors but they would be easier to talk to...re: personal problems, re: our sexuality. Unfortunately, living as we do, in the Bible Belt of the country, many of us feel we have to sneak around for medical attention, this is unfair to feel underprivileged.

Many of us have animals also who we would like to take to a gay vet.

Please don't exclude non-North Carolina members. There are several, I know, frustrated people in the surrounding states as well who would give up their left arm and eye teeth to have a qualified gay man or lesbian to go to during times when medical care is needed, for us and for our pets.

If you can think of, or give any suggestions, that I could do in the Atlanta area, please contact me. I'd love to be more involved.

A devoted Atlanta fan,
G. Blair Moore

P.S. This should not be limited only to the Medical field, either. Consider legal and other professional fields as well.

Dear Blair:

Please understand that the survey you are referring to is not a project of *The Front Page*. It is the brainchild of a group of lesbians and gay men working together under the title of "The Gay and Lesbian Health Project."

Please also understand the scope of the survey. Trying to compile figures from a 100 question survey with responses from all over the state of North Carolina is going to be an enormous task. Given a limited number of people and dollars, surveying the entire southeast would be impossible.

If, however, there are similar interest groups in South Carolina and Georgia, I'm sure *The Front Page* and the Health Project would try to give them any possible help.

— Editor

P.S. Thanks for being a devoted *Front Page* fan in Atlanta. Tell your friends!

The Bars

To the Editor:

With all due respect to "the Triangle's gay owned and operated bars," I found the recent ad campaign somewhat offensive, inappropriately moralistic and disappointingly short-sighted.

The premise that one should patronize a club strictly on the basis of gay ownership is an insult to the intelligent free will of consumers, straight or gay. I am in favor of community economic strength as much as the next person and I am fully appreciative of the entrepreneurial risks such businesses as the Capital Corral and 42nd Street have taken and the "sweat equity" they have created by continuing to provide facilities and programs that meet the community's needs. I would hasten to point out, however, that none of the "Big Four" establishments in the ad campaign has engaged itself in community outreach to any significant extent; in other markets, for example, bars from time to time become significant in fund-raising activities for political action or specific projects such as AIDS research. Moreover, it has been the practice of a bar such as the CC to pursue a rather narrow definition of the community by marketing to "men." For sure there's nothing wrong with that; it just seems improper to appeal to the community at large on the basis of community pride when in fact the businesses who are preaching this message are in the bar business, not the community services business.

It also occurs to me that this ad campaign smells a bit desperate. If there is a new product on the market, even if the ownership is straight, I would think gay-owned bars would have an inherent advantage; direct access to the needs and desires of the gay community. In our free enterprise system, economic strength in fact is a function of creative competition. Perhaps the Triangle or central NC gay market has become increasingly diverse and sophisticated to the point that it can support a wide variety of bars. It could also be the case that the market cannot yet support such diversity on a sustained basis. In any event, the bars that are going to survive are the ones that react best and most creatively to the market, not to the competition per se.

I do not mean in any way to disparage the good work done by the "gay-owned and

operated bars." I merely speak in the spirit of community, which I believe is kindled by creative diversity and is harmed by focusing on negative issues.

Yours in community,
Craig Wilson
Raleigh

Dear Editor:

I greatly enjoyed your recent "Gay Pride" issue and was amused by the letter entitled "Remembering the Pegasus." The writer told of the gay community's defection from a gay-owned bar (The Pegasus) to a glittering, but straight-owned, disco (The Electric Company). The writer's reaction to all of this seemed a little extreme — going straight and getting married seems an odd way to protest the closing of your favorite bar.

While we're on the subject, I would like to comment on an ad that recently appeared in *The Front Page*. It was on behalf of the Triangle's gay owned and operated bars. I found it offensive and more than little in bad taste. It's always sad to hear grown people whine.

I also found it odd since I have frequently talked with one of the owners of one of the bars, and he can talk for hours on the subject of the free market economy and laissez-faire capitalism. His participation in this ad contradicts everything he's ever said.

In a free-market economy, a product succeeds because it is better or cheaper, not because of the national or ethnic or sexual origins of the makers. Competition is good for business. I don't know if the area can support this many bars, but as they compete for business, their patrons are bound to benefit.

Thanks for letting me have my say.

Rick
Durham

Dear Sirs:

Recently several friends and I decided to take a drive to Raleigh to check out C.C.'s. We had heard a lot about the club and none of us had ever been to the place.

Well, I've come to the conclusion that the Club Capital Corral and Glitter Gulch Disco is tackier than any club that can be found in Fayetteville, NC.

To start with, if the place is going to advertise, they have to expect people to travel

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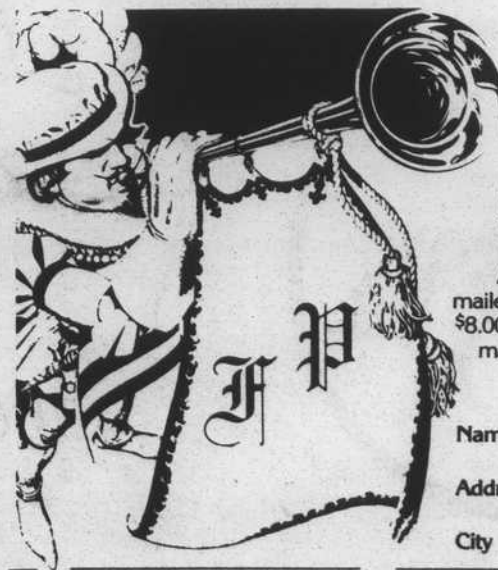
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