



New Rightist Howard Phillips Tim Grant

Unite Against Right, Houston Caucus Told

By Richard Burckhardt

HOUSTON — Houston Gay Political Caucus political action chair Barbara Ciganero told participants here at a recent community forum that the rapid rise of the New Right in politics has come about by intensive grass roots organizing and a centralized fund-raising network.

Ciganero, an ex-nun whose research on a possible new Coors boycott grew into the presentation entitled "The Moral Majority, New Right and the Gay Community," said that despite all of the credit that has gone to the Moral Majority in the recent elections, the Moral Majority is probably the "least of our worries."

"We're talking about a brand new element in our society . . . a battle of political action committees," said Ciganero.

Among the political action groups that gays should be on the lookout for are the Committee for Survival of a Free Congress, a group that targets liberals and is supported by such businesses as Coors beer, and the Free Congress Research Foundation, a pro-family, anti-homosexual organization.

One organization that Ciganero stressed as important for us to watch in the near future is the Heritage Foundation, a self-proclaimed "think tank" for the right wing. Edwin Meese, Ronald Reagan's transition chief, is involved in this group, according to Ciganero.

"They [Heritage Foundation] want such things as doing away with restrictions on the FBI for opening mail, and the ability for government agencies to wiretap without warrant," said Ciganero.

Ciganero said that all of the right wing agencies in America are tied together by a central fund-raising agency run by Richard Viguerie, a former Houstonian. Viguerie raises money through direct mail solicitations.

"He raises more money for the right wing than anyone else," said

Ciganero. "He's got the direct mail solicitation technique down to a fine tee."

Ciganero said that most of the mail solicitations are in the form of a questionnaire asking about opinions on different subjects. Viguerie's organization will then "plug you into" a group consistent with your answers.

"In 1978, conservative right wing groups raised over \$20 million for Congressional races," she said.

Seed money to begin this fund-raising network came from sources that include the Marriott Hotel chain, Joseph Coors of Coors beer, Amway, Mobil Oil, Pepsico, and Ocean Spray Cranberry Juice, said Ciganero.

The most visible of the right wing groups in America, the Moral Majority, was formed by a core group consisting of Howard Phillips of the Conservative Caucus, Robert Billings, and Ed McAteer, a man involved with Colgate/Palmolive, she went on to say.

"They approached Jerry Falwell and suggested that he start an organization called the Moral Majority. "It would be run by Robert Billings, and Falwell would be the public relations person."

Ed McAteer organized the Religious Roundtable conference in Dallas in 1980, where Ronald Reagan endorsed anti-gay stances by the conference, according to Ciganero.

She further stated that the Moral Majority's next target will be the media. The program "Soap," she said, is one of their primary targets because of the gay character "Jody," who is portrayed as a sensitive, positive character.

Ciganero believes that the religious right has the ability to affect the media. The Christian Broadcasting Network is growing and transmits by satellite all over the country.

"Jerry Falwell is the second

BACCAR Facing Problems Despite Federal Grant

By David Morris

BOSTON — A local organization formed to aid lesbian and gay Cuban refugees has found that it still faces major logistical and financial problems despite a sizable grant from the federal government.

The Boston Area Coalition for Cuban Aid and Resettlement (BACCAR) voted at a Jan. 18 meeting to request more time or, if the request is denied, to return a \$16,000 grant to the federal inter-agency Cuban-Haitian Task Force unless suitable housing for five refugees is found by Jan. 26.

The grant was made to cover part of the expenses of housing and feeding about 12 refugees in the Boston area for four months and to help find sponsors for another eight.

The federal government plans to send 20 lesbian and gay refugees to Boston during the month of February, the first group arriving around the first of the month.

BACCAR members say the grant, if kept, will cover only about two-thirds of their costs. In addition to housing and feeding 12 people for four months, or until they are able to live independently, the group's plans call for a full-time English teacher and a part-time counselor on salaries to help the refugees adjust to life in Boston.

BACCAR presently has about \$1,000 in its treasury, and has received pledges for about \$120 a month for one year (see *GCN*, Vol. 8, No. 20). Pledges and other donations are still being sought.

At the Jan. 18 meeting,

BACCAR members discussed the difficulty of finding suitable places for the refugees to live in a city with a severe housing shortage. They are looking for houses or apartments in a low-cost, ethnically mixed neighborhood, such as Allston or Jamaica Plain.

Additional difficulties stem from the fact that about five of the 20 Cubans will be women who may prefer not to live with male refugees. A special BACCAR meeting has been called for Sunday, Jan. 25, to discuss the needs of lesbian refugees and to coordinate support from Boston-area women.

In addition to money and housing, BACCAR needs donations of furniture, particularly bedding, and winter clothes. For more information or to offer support, call (617) 354-1755.

Blind Man Kept Out of Baths

By David Morris

BOSTON — A visually impaired man was denied entry into the Club Boston bathhouse recently because, according to the manager, his presence would endanger other patrons in the event of a fire.

The partially blind man, who requested that his name not be used, had entered the establishment and was looking for the locker he had rented when Club Boston manager George Phillips noticed the difficulty he was having finding it.

"Since you can't see, you can't stay here," the man quoted Phillips as saying.

Phillips then told the man he could patronize the baths only with a sighted companion who could help him find his way around.

Phillips told *GCN* that as many as 200 patrons are on the four

floors of Club Boston at one time and that the lighting is dim.

"I certainly would not want to jeopardize the lives of many people in the event a fire should occur or any type of excitement in the building which is going to create a havoc of any sort," he said.

Phillips said the stairwells are sometimes hard to find even for sighted persons.

The partially blind man reported that he had been to many other baths in the country, including some belonging to the same chain as Club Boston, and had never before had problems.

But Phillips said that since most other baths have only one or two floors, stairs are not a problem in them.

The Regency, the other Boston bathhouse, which has two floors, places no restriction on visually impaired patrons.

In 1978 a blind man filed a com-

plaint with the New York City Human Rights Commission after being refused admission to Man's Country, a bath house there that advertises "Ten floors, fully fire-proof."

Although he was accompanied by a sighted friend, employees told him he could not use the baths because of the possibility of a fire. The case was later settled out of court.

Phillips told *GCN* his insurance policy prohibits patrons with ambulatory problems and that persons on crutches, for example, could not use the baths under any conditions. He said the visually impaired may patronize the establishment if they are accompanied by a sighted person.

"He's more than welcome to come back," Phillips said, "as long as he has someone that can assist him in finding where the stairwells are."

Black Lesbian Conference

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"critically important," recalled that "a lot of black lesbians said that they associated with a lot of white women . . . because they need to be with lesbians but they don't know many black lesbians. But, they said, then they get shit from their white lovers for needing to be with other black women. A woman said that sometimes she feels like she has to choose between being black and being loved."

Lowe told *GCN* that she sense that white women in the workshop felt a great deal of guilt about being white, and she explained why she thinks that's counterproductive: "The onus isn't on me to process out the racism in white women, anymore than the onus is on white women to apologize to me for the history of oppression of black people by whites. I don't require an apology, I don't even want one . . . What I want is for all of us to love ourselves as who we are. That's difficult. And as difficult as it is for black women to love themselves as black women, it more difficult for white women to love themselves and their whiteness . . . because it's very difficult for people who consider themselves oppressors to love themselves. That's how the culture divides us: built-in guilt."

"In order for both of us — black women and white women — to be empowered, we're-going to have to rid ourselves of a lot of feeling we don't even know we have. So I require that white women not adulate black women or feel guilt; if I'm going to align myself with someone, I require that they first respect themselves."

In another heavily attended workshop, "Black Women and

Feminism," black women discussed their fear of taking leadership and power — and the courage of black women who do so in spite of their fear.

"We have a messiah mentality," said Demita Frazier, co-facilitator of the workshop. "You think someone else is going to cover your behind for you. . . . You say, 'You're a black feminist, you tell us what to do. Teach us.'"

"Well, there's a place for teaching, but I resent that I must save someone else because they can't save themselves. . . ."

"There's no magic formula. Nothing's going to turn you into a feminist except your own courage."

"To be courageous," added Beverly Smith, "means to be afraid but to go a little step forward anyway. If you say, 'I'm not afraid of anything,' that's white boy bullshit."

"The thing about courage is that your courage turns me on," another woman said. "When I got up and walked behind Martin Luther King, when I suddenly found myself — a thirty year old woman — hanging from a telephone pole, I said, 'Hey, look at me! What turned me on to act?' Other people's courage."

Another woman added, "Black women's courage goes unnoticed . . . The black women on my street are the most courageous people I see. She gets up to dress the kids, gets them off to school, gets herself to the subway and gets to that job where she's going to get fucked over for sure, gets home to make that meal — that's courage!"

To this statement, black lesbian poet Audre Lorde, who was present at the workshop, responded,

"We get strong by doing the things we need to be strong for."

Another theme which made an appearance — sometimes solicited, sometimes not — in many discussions and gatherings throughout the weekend was that of difference — dealing with differences in cultural background or color or class among black lesbians.

Differences that have divided Jamaican-American and Afro-American women were discussed in a workshop entitled "Cross-Cultural Relationships: Problems and Pleasures." "We didn't get a chance to do more than talk," said one woman at the workshop, "to solve any of the problems. But we talked about how difference is just difference, not positive or negative. And about how fear is the greatest deterrent to learning and understanding."

In "Black Women and Feminism," Frazier called for unity between black women and all other Third World women as well, and acknowledged a major obstacle to achieving that goal. "We must be open to Latina and Native American sisters, but this is hard because we [Afro-American people] have seen that being open can hurt us. In the past, our being open hasn't been under our control," she said.

Another woman focused on how the notion of political correctness divides black lesbians into separate, "warring" communities. "One black woman will say to another, 'You get too high,' or 'We don't wear those kind of jackets no more . . . We don't go with those kinds of girls no more . . . We don't wear men's drawers no more.' We're doing something to each other that's been done to

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Clark, Jil. "Black Lesbians Gather in First Eastern Conference." *Gay Community News*, vol. 8, no. 27, 31 Jan. 1981, pp. [1]+. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, link.gale.com/apps/doc/LIPQZU586446145/AHSI?u=nypl&sid=bookmark-AHSI. Accessed 2 Apr. 2023.