

The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Inc.

The NUN Issue

San Francisco

Talk About It Today!

Vol. I April, 1993

MARCH ON WASHINGTON!

For Transgender, Lesbian, Gay and Bi Rights

OUR TIME HAS COME ... But on Whose Terms?

by

Sister Vicious Power Hungry Bitch

"We All Go, Or We Don't Go!"

-- Harvey Milk

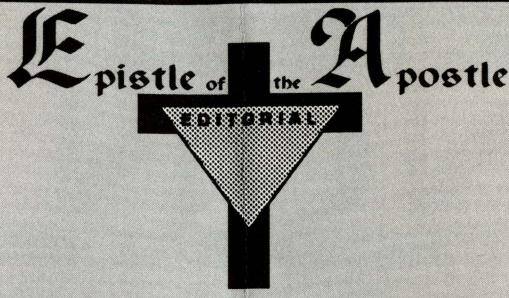
The Christian Coalition and numerous right-wing homophobes have proven the continued effectiveness of "queer" baiting as a tool to exploit the divisions within our community. A recent videotape developed in Concord, California and used during the Oregon proposition campaign epitomizes this tactic.

All too often the response to this tactic by our gay and lesbian leaders has been to victimize members of our own community – attacking, sacrificing and marginalizing drag queens, transvestites, transexuals and "queers" exhibiting behavior perceived to be unacceptable to the dominant culture. Individual freedom remains the cornerstone of our movement. We must create the rhetoric and rationale that defends individual freedom of expression while preserving and promoting our civil rights.



PHOTO: SISTER X

NO MORE SACRIFICIAL LAMBS! !!



DRAGPHOBIA !

by
XENA PHILIA

Heterosexuals, it would seem, don't have a problem with drag. Before you scoff, think about it: Middle America has embraced Drag Queens from Milton Berle, Flip Wilson, *Tootsie* and *Bosom Buddies* to Dame Edna. The only time drag is a problem is when it's associated with gay or lesbian. Contrary to current conservative assimilationist lesbian/gay politics, transgenders are not impeding the movement: actually, it's gays and lesbians who are messing with a long-established rapport between heterosexuals and Drag Queens. *Who's raining on whose parade?*

"We're all born naked; whatever you wear is drag." – *Word is Out*

Those lesbians who refuse to support the transgender community reveal themselves as sexist, hypocritical and surprisingly tied to gender stereotypes. One frequently-heard response to Drag Queens by some lesbians is that "Drags are sexist and mock women." Who would suggest a woman wearing workboots is either sexist or "mocking" men? So whose business is it, really, if a man wants to wear pumps? Let's get over ourselves, here!

Some gay men, afraid of their own feminine aspects, worry that by associating with Drag Queens someone might question if they are "all male." Again, let's get over it.

Transgender people and queers are an Achilles heel only to self-appointed gay and lesbian leaders who try to deny their existence. If we create a conformist, heterosexist image and try to fit all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people into it, what have we gained? Are we not back in the same closets we were in before Drag Queens of color had the balls to face down the police at the Stonewall Drag Riots of 1969?

There is a basic confusion about differences between the lesbian/gay civil rights struggle and the transgender, bisexual and queer liberation movement. One is about securing rights already given to us by the Constitution: rights that the dominant heterosexual culture is holding hostage, until we agree to become and act "just like them." The liberation movement led by transgender people, queers, dykes, bisexuals, et. al. is about the freedom of self; the right to self-determine who you are and how you will express it; and it is about exercising your God-given right to freedom of speech, thought, and expression – Liberation of the imagination! Harvey Milk said, "We should not sell out who we are (as individuals and community) in order to get the rights to which we are entitled." It's time to reaffirm Harvey's legacy of pride and justice by demanding from ourselves that we embrace and celebrate the richly textured differences in our community. We are not "just like heterosexuals."

And I, for one, have no desire to be so.

"Drag feels like a very honest way of saying who I am." – Queer Johnny

Gays and lesbians are dragophobic for the same reasons they are homophobic or AIDSphobic or xenophobic: it's reflective – in the Drag Queen, they see their own unresolved issues of fear, gender and sexuality. Instead of exploring their own inner feelings, they make the Drag Queen wrong just for being there. That sets up permission to react with hatred and hostility.

"Ye doth protest too much!"

N U N D E R S T A N D I N G S

ABOUT THE SISTERS

"The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Inc." is a controversial order of gay, bisexual and transgender "nuns" of various religious backgrounds founded in Iowa in the mid-1970s. The Order migrated to San Francisco, where it formally settled on Easter Sunday, 1979. In 1987 the Order incorporated as a non-profit, public benefit charitable corporation in California. The Sisters are social and spiritual educators who use the art of theater to educate and enlighten on subjects like freedom of thought and expression, gender polarity and identification, the politics of gender and oppression, AIDS and safe sex responsibility, violence, death and dying, homophobia, dragphobia, AIDSphobia and bigotry. The Sisters are also preeminent fundraisers in the Lesbian and Gay Community, having raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for a myriad of AIDS care and other community organizations over the last fourteen years. The Sisters have been on the front lines of the AIDS War since it began, publishing the world's first safe sex education in their innovative "*Play Fair!*" pamphlet in the very early 1980s, before the AIDS acronym was even coined. The Sisters also produced the first AIDS fundraiser in the world, a dog show on Castro Street which eventually drew Shirley MacLaine as Mistress of Ceremonies. A Sister also created and painted the banner for the first AIDS protest march, "Fighting for Our Lives." And the first AIDS patient in world to go public was Bobby Campbell, the AIDS Poster Boy and Sister Florence Nightmare R.N. When **TIME** magazine put his picture on the cover, it was the first time America or the world had seen the face of a person with AIDS. The Sisters are now an International Order with convents in Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France, Great Britain, South Africa, Ireland, Norway and growing. San Francisco remains the Mother House of the Order, overseeing the international convents and those established in Denver, Colorado, Seattle, Washington, and missions in Los Angeles, California, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Short Mt., Tennessee. The Sisters also tour internationally with their acclaimed safe sex show, "*Indulgence Sunday*," featuring their provocative "*Condom Savior Mass*." Current major projects include: "*I Took The Vow*," a safe sex education and condom distribution project (*see page 4*); "*Stop The Violence*," a neighborhood safety program; "*Whistle for Safety*," a whistle distribution program; and the fourth annual *Castro Halloween* fundraiser. This event has netted the Sisters a Cable Car Award in 1990 for **Best Event** and nominations for **Best Event**, 1991 and 1992. It is expected that the group will take home the prestigious award for 1992 on March 20th.

SPI, INC. GRANT RECIPIENTS 1979 - PRESENT

Names Quilt Project, Gay Games I, II, and III, The San Francisco Mayor's Earthquake Relief Fund, The San Francisco Mayor's Homeless Project, The AIDS Emergency Fund, Stop AIDS Resource Center, San Francisco Band Foundation, The American Run for the End of AIDS, Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Committee, Community United Against Violence (CUAV), United States Mission, Christmas Packages for Prisoners Outreach Program, Gay Community Center, Gay & Lesbian Cuban Refugee Program, Metropolitan Community Church, Candlelight March Against Violence, Harvey Milk Gay Democratic Club, Kaposi Sarcoma Research and Education Foundation, Gay Men of Color AIDS Consortium, Lambda Empowerment Project, San Francisco's Gay Men's Chorus, Queer Nation, ACTUP, National Action on Hollywood Homophobia, Stop the Violence Campaign, San Francisco Positive Resource (Job Referral for PWA/HIV+ Persons), Health Outreach (Health Care for PWA/HIV+ IV drug users), Early Advocacy & Care for HIV (EACH), Lyon-Martin Women's Health Services, San Francisco General Hospital Ward 5A, San Francisco Street Patrol, African American AIDS Support Services and Survival Institute, Inc., Queer Village AB 101 Monument/Hollywood.

1992 Castro Halloween Fundraising Grants:

PAWS (Pets are Wonderful Support), Marin AIDS Project for Inmates at San Quentin Project, East Oakland Recovery Center AIDS Awareness Support Groups, WORLD (Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases), Health Outreach Team (Tenderloin/South of Market AIDS Outreach), AMASSI (African American AIDS Support Services & Survival Institute), EACH (Early Advocacy & Care for HIV+), Patient Care Fund, 5A-AIDS Special Care Unit (SF General Hospital), Lyon Martin Women's Health Services, Asian AIDS Project (Asian/Pacific Islander Transgender and Transexual population), Maitre Hospice.



"Death of the Angels" by Beth Kukucka

Models: Donn "Angelo" Simione and Sister X

I TOOK THE VOW

CONDOM SAVIOR VOW

We have gathered today to consecrate and receive the Holy Communion Condom. As I take it onto myself, so shall I keep its ritual sacred. The condom is part of my life - part of my responsibility, now. If I desire to live, and let my sex partners live, I must sanctify my vow to hold the condom savior eternal. My seed is under siege by a horrific virus - Let me not become horrific as well with careless disregard for my life and the lives of those with whom I share the divine gift of love. My life is to promulgate universal joy and expiate myself from stigmatic guilt. In my Creator's likeness, I am alive and I must protect the handiwork.

I VOW TO LOOK INTO MY HEART AND FURTHER INTO MY SOUL, WHERE I KNOW THAT MY HUMANITY AND SALVATION DEPEND ON HOW SACRED I HOLD THE CONDOM VOW.

LATEX = LUST LATEX = LIFE LATEX = LOVE

the
**Sisters
of Perpetual
Indulgence, Inc.**

"I Took The Vow" T-Shirts Available - \$12 Donation

Donations Go To The AIDS Community

Ministry of Media: (415) 626-3330

NEWS & NUNSUCH FROM ABROAD

Couvent de Paris

Negotiations continue with *Warner Bros.* and *Virgin Records* to record the Sisters' new dance record and MTV-style video, "A Brand New Day In Babylon."

xxx

Die Schwestern der Perpetuellen Indulgenz

Our new convent, headquartered in Heidelberg, Germany, struggles forward through difficult times, preparing for the 9th International AIDS Conference to be held in Berlin, Germany, June, 7-11, 1993 and *Europride, Berlin 1993*, June 12-26, 1993.

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Convent of Australia

The good Sisters of Sydney continue their very political work, producing the outstanding and voluminous "Trail" newsletter. The Order continues its "Nuncheons," where the current hot topic is whether or not to allow lesbians to join the Order.

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Convent of London

The English Order continues in disarray and schism. The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, "Angels of Mercy" has recently emerged from the backbiting and in-fighting.

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San Francisco Mother House

Valentine Day saw the distribution of the 1992 Castro Halloween funds (see Nunderstandings). This year's event produced record donations of nearly \$55,000, which was distributed to local AIDS and community services groups on Valentine Day.

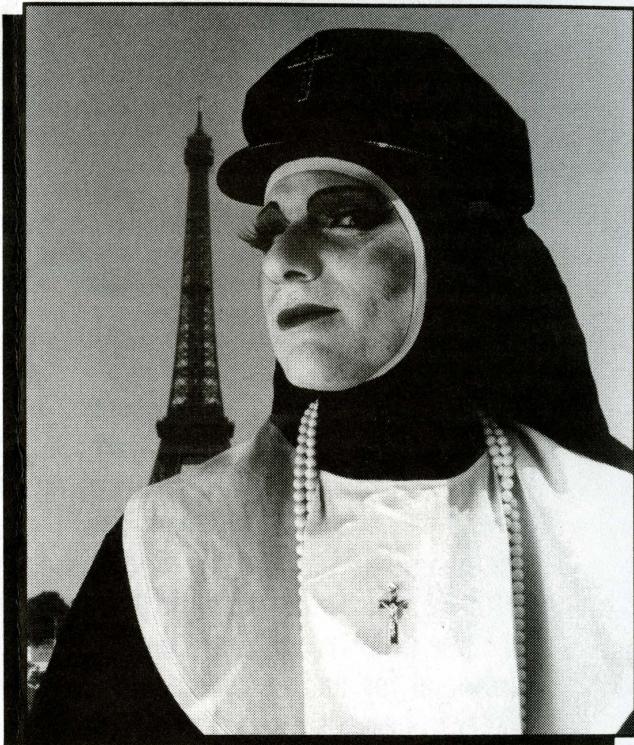
xxx

1992 proved to be a very busy year for the Mother House, including formation of Missions in New Orleans, Hollywood and Short Mountain, Tennessee. 1993 promises to be an even busier year with the annual AIDS Walk-a-Thon, AIDS Dance-a-Thon, World AIDS Day, Gay Pride Celebration, AIDS Vigil, X-mas Dinner for PWA/HIV+ Persons, National March on Washington, and Queer Army activities.

xxx

On the media front, the documentary on the Sisters, tentatively titled "The Clown Nuns" has gone into the editing phase with filmmaker, Bruce Herbert, aka, Father Flick. A Spring 1994 Release is anticipated.

Photo: Jean-Baptiste Carhaix, Paris, 1992



In Loving Memory

Pierre Nadeau aka Sister Vice & Virtue (Vivie!)
August 1, 1959 - August 1, 1992

xxx

The Sisters have recently finished filming a key scene in the nearly completed film, "Virtue" by Camera Obscura. The film is set in the future and deals with virtual reality.

The Sisters, of course, virtuously play themselves.

xxx

Also in the editing phase is a film by Los Angeles filmmaker, Phil Tarley. Titled "The Year of the Queer," the film features the Sisters and stars Sister X of the San Francisco and Paris Orders.

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Sister X and Father Hazel recently participated in an NBC News special on violence against gays and lesbians and the topic of the moment, "Lesbians and Gays in the Military."

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The Seattle Order will appear in the soon-to-be-released Jeff Bridges film, "American Heart."

QUEER ARMY NEWS

QUEERS, QUEENS AND TRANSGENDERERS FIGHTING FOR YOUR RIGHTS!

ACTION ALERT! ! ! PASSION PLAY AND EASTER UPRISING!

2ND ANNUAL EASTER SUNDAY DEMONSTRATION AT CAPITAL CHRISTIAN CENTER

SACRAMENTO – Gays and Lesbians will return Easter Sunday, April 11, 1993, to the Capital Christian Center, a homophobic and AIDSphobic fundamentalist church in the State's Capital. The church's resident homophobic reverend, Glen Cole, undoubtedly looks forward to it as much as the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the dead man nailed to a cross, around whose memory Cole's ilk has created a weird, faux-cannibalistic 'Death Cult' but whose spirit, politics and rebellion they would despise if they were to meet him in the flesh.

Last year's action theme was "STOP CRUCIFYING QUEERS!" And, of course, they haven't and continue their aggressive political agenda by feverishly lobbying local, state and federal representatives and senators. Last year's protest dealt with the likes of Operation Rescue and Pat Robertson's 700 Club, who came to coalition with Capital fundies. Video cameras and the church's security were out in force. Clearly, Reverend Cole and his cohorts have discovered the power of the media, as they continue to mix their tax-exempt state and federal status with the politics of hate. Sacramento's finest in blue provided unnecessary and expensive backup to the church's private security force. Indeed, although the demonstration was designed to be peaceful, the sheriff of Sacto only felt secure with massive police backup, including a helicopter. Emergency vehicles stood by just in case the peaceful demonstrators needed to be subdued with clubs or lead. The taxpayers paid for the fundies' party, of course.

As would be expected, our "Queer Army" contingent led the troops into the Easter Rising battle. Who but the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence could provide the necessary irreverence and derring-do? The Sisters' suggestion: "Stop the Church, Bring Back the Lions" – was clearly lost on the fundies eager for the blood of heathens. The Sisters' 14-year anniversary not so coincidentally falls on Holy Saturday, the eve of the great resurrection. And what would an Easter occasion be without pastel regalia and hats galore – "STOP THE HATS!"

April 11 will find the Sisters festooned in finery the Christians have not seen since last year. How dull their lives would be if they didn't have the annual pilgrimage by Queer Army. Last year's coup was the young Capital Christian who defected to Queer Army. This year the Sisters will perform a same-sex marriage. Since the military has no use for Gays or Lesbians or Queers or Transgender People, this is your chance to join hands with *real* soldiers.

SISTER SAM WANTS YOU! JOIN QUEER ARMY TODAY! NO WARS -- FABULOUS PARADES!

CHARTERED MOTOR COACH -- \$15 ROUNDTRIP
DEPARTS CHURCH AND MARKET STREET SAFEWAY,
7:45 A.M., RETURNS TO SAN FRANCISCO 5:00 P.M.
SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 1993.

UPDATES ON THE QUEER ARMY HOTLINE: (415) 552-0220

The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Inc.

United States, Australia, France, Great Britain, Germany

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 1993

QUEER SUMMIT
First Unitarian Church
San Francisco
March 13, 1993

AIDS AWARENESS FORUM
San Franciscp State
San Francisco
March 17, 1993

AIDS DANCE-A-THON
Fort Mason Center
San Francisco
March 13, 1993

CABLE CAR AWARDS
Fashion Center
San Francisco
March 20, 1993

APRIL 1993

QUEER ARMY
CAPITOL CHRISTIAN CENTER
EASTER SUNDAY RALLY
Sacramento
April 11, 1993

MARCH ON WASHINGTON
Washington, D.C.
April 25, 1993

MAY 1993

AIDS CANDLELIGHT VIGIL
MEMORIAL DAY
San Francisco
May 31, 1993

JUNE 1993

GAY PRIDE CELEBRATION
San Francisco
June 27, 1993