

Dear Randy,

My steady support and laughing companion in our more meaningful "Opposition-to-Stonewall25" March —

Be merry!

Harry Hay

and

John Burnside

MARCHING WITH HARRY HAY & KEEPING THE TRUE SPIRIT
OF STONEWALL ALIVE ON GAY PRIDE DAY !

by randy wicker

Christmas Letter - 1994

Ruinous confessions. Outrageous giggles . Laughter too! What juicy tidbits, this year , I get to share with you . But first , for the morbidly curious, an update on last year's torturous documentary .

Well , as you might have suspected , I wasn't clinking glasses with the Flimlins on New Years . Instead , I treated CoCo to Boy George's "Absolutely Queer" concert at NYC's Beacon Theater.

Individual family member responses to last year's letter were varied . Those who had been warm towards George & I , remained so . His sister, Regina , called me on Valentine's Day - a very nice touch . During the spring she also invited me to accompany her to Key West last July where George's ashes kept their date with the sea. And his other closest sister , Ann Marie, always seemed delighted to hear from me on those rare occasions I happened to call .

Georgiana , George's mother, took the special "color edition" Xmas letter I'd painstakenly enhanced by hand pasting color copies over all the photos in it and discarded it., commenting only - "I'm glad Randy was able to mourn ."

After New Year's, with my life now back into my HIV negative hands , I resolved to heed Marsha's admonition: "Go out and have fun for all those girls who aren't here anymore . No one is promised tomorrow!"

Of course, I could always dive into writing my someday-to-come autobiographical blockbuster with a catchy title like Confessions Of A Hoboken Madam or We Are All Prostitutes! We Are All Johns! It would be the seething story of the conflicts between heart & mind as an aging romantic struggles to avoid being victimized by the 'Youth & Beauty' culture which imprisons him. But that wouldn't really be a career change!

It was too late to become a rock star. And I'd never have a prayer of saving the country by becoming President . Why not have a shot at becoming a comedian? I was certainly sick enough . Telling jokes should certainly ward off depression . I might even become popular at parties . Fame through "mass murder" would be my goal --slaying the multitudes with uncontrollable suffocating laughter!

I read a few books on writing comedy. The amateur nights at the local Village comedy clubs were fascinating. The comedian fraternity that grouped itself on the back row - critiquing each act - whispering in one another's ear was an inviting looking group indeed. Surprisingly , it included a good number of openly gay males .

But somehow , by the time I had my "last loyal fan of Tonya Harding" routine almost developed, there was a nearly total personnel turnover at the shop . Simultaneously, spring crowds rushed in as the endless snows of winter finally melted away . Mammon had risen again . I couldn't resist his siren song & returned to the center of my universe, my cash register. Oh well, there's always next year...

In May, I headed for Maine on a roundabout buying trip/vacation on the way to the huge antique extravaganza at Brimfield, Mass. I spent the weekend in Bangor , Maine visiting Nelson [redacted] , an old friend and ex-employee .

Nelson was the charming creative fellow who popped up out of a large giftbox at George's birthday party on July 4th, 1991 cleverly attired in just an American flag. He'd found New York too fastpaced, too harried & draining. He'd followed a friend to Maine & fallen in love with the place.

During the previous year, he'd explored every nook & cranny of the State getting to know it well. And what an extraordinary host & enthusiastic guide he turned out to be--shepherding me through the nearly empty Acadia National Park like it was his own private estate, leading me to remote country auctions where real bargains abounded, exploring indoor flea markets at a nearby College.

In Bangor, Nelson was not only able to live comfortably on disability but had become a key volunteer at the local AIDS Network several days a week. Having obviously inherited remarkable artistic talent from his mother who is both a painter & caricaturist, Nelson had finally found an enviroment, where he could develpe his craft. Initially refused, months later he would sell me one of his first paintings.



NELSON DRESSED CREATIVELY FOR GEORGE'S JULY 4TH BIRTHDAY PARTY IN 1991



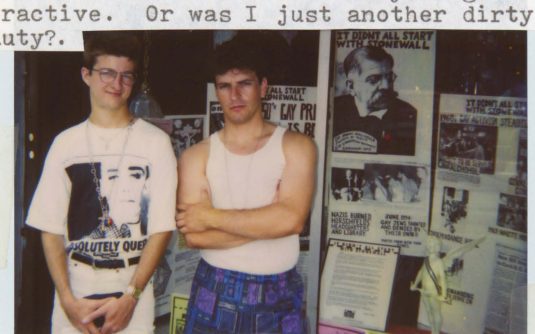
"INFINITE HANDS"
NELSON'S FIRST PAINTING

That Monday, Nelson dutifully accompanied me to Brimfield. Although Maine had been unique, special, beautiful & relaxing, Brimfield proved to be a grueling, adventuresome, exhausting test.

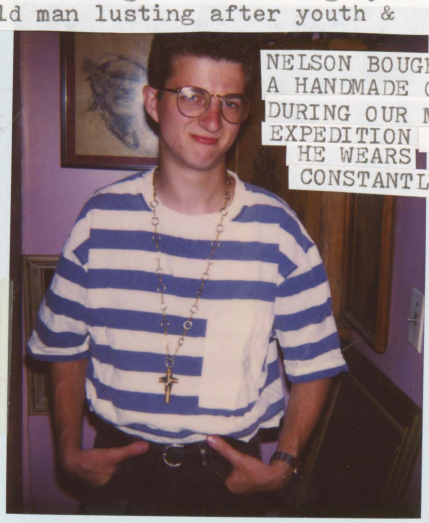
We bought $11,000 worth of stuff in barely two days. Nelson energetic--ally & miraculously packed everything perfectly without any breakage. As he did so, yours truly literally lay on the ground feeling near death--drained, tired, exhausted & bankrupt. Let's face it. Even Santa would be a helpless putz without his little helper elves.

While Nelson worked for me several years ago, the other employees always accused me of being 'sweet' on him--saying he could wrap me around his finger, that I thought he could do no wrong. I truthfully & in all good conscience denied it. He always wore baggy clothes & I never even thought of him in any physical way. Now everything had changed. I must have stayed out in the Maine sun too long. I was somewhat smitten.

But for all my questionable charm, lavish expense account, and open wallet, and pre-senility fantasies, the reality was that David, an old beau from Memphis, was Nelson's heartthrob. It was all sheer madness anyway. Nelson was HIV+ and talked in terms of having a few years left to live. I wondered if I actually sought out suffering or found tragedy attractive. Or was I just another dirty old man lusting after youth & beauty?.



NELSON & HIS FRIEND DAVID VISITED ON WAY BACK TO MAINE IN EARLY JUNE.



NELSON BOUGHT A HANDMADE CROSS DURING OUR MAINE EXPEDITION THAT HE WEARS CONSTANTLY

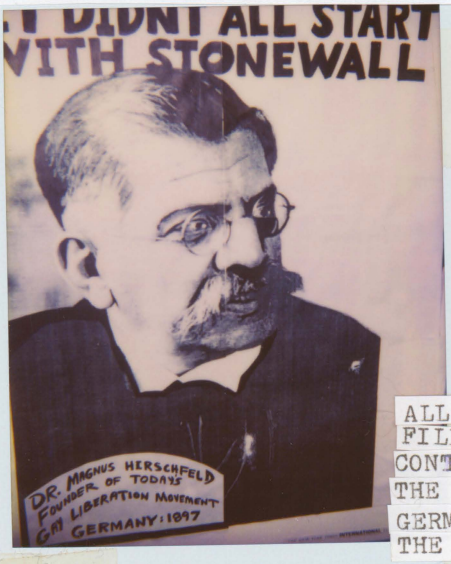
I knew Nelson enjoyed my company because he always laughed at my jokes. Many of my oldest & dearest friends are like that. Of course, someone closer in age always enjoys a great advantage. But money, skillfully used, can sometimes prove to be stronger & more attractive than muscles.

Dalliances aside, 1994 marked the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. For me, this was serious stuff. A chance to set the record straight. Another opportunity to crawl out of the dust bowl of history!

The week of June 26th, a million gays - and a million and one journalists- swarmed into NYC from all over the world. As an early activist, I was on everyone's circuit.

Ahhh, the psychic orgasm, the ego bliss of once again being the triumphant media whore! - the subject of TV, radio & print journalists feeding frenzy!

A few days before the march on the U.N. I attended a press conference at the Gay Community Center, where, along with Bill Dobbs, Brendan Fay & others, we'd cornered a few familar tv reporters & attempted to put our own spin on things. My agenda was, as an exhibit completely filling Uplift's window documented, "It didn't all start with Stonewall." Bill Dobbs was promoting the alternative march. Brendan Fay was brandishing my old "Homosexuals for Peace" button design & promoting his protest against the gay dance being held on The Intrepid, a World War II aircraft carrier.





ALL DURING JUNE, UPLIFT'S MAIN WINDOW WAS FILLED WITH AN EXHIBIT EMPHASIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THOSE WHO PRECEDED STONEWALL. THE REAL FOCUS OF THE WINDOW WAS ON THE GERMAN VISIONARY MAGNUS HERSCHFELD WHO FORMED THE FIRST GROUP IN 1897

Returning to the shop, I found a virtual cue of reporters - some waiting, others on their way. First, it was an hour chat over coffee with a writer from the German paper, Des Spiegle. Then English radio, the Guardian, did a 45 minute live interview via overseas telephone.

Next, National Public Radio reappeared for the second time that month to tape personal recollections on gay life in the 1950s for an "All Things Considered" program. Ultimately, they used my recollections about slow dancing at parties to Johnny Mathis records for the opening couple minutes.

Finally, there were a couple reporters from small gay papers originating out of places like Tampa, Florida. And a few serious scholars gathering material for books. Never talked so much in my life.

For me, the year's highlight turned out to be the big march on June 26th. It was there that I finally caught up with Harry Hay, the founding father of America's gay groups, the man who singlehandedly started the first Mattachine Society in 1948. It had taken him two years to find another gay who agreed with his activist ideas. The closet was surely shut tight & very very dark in 1948!

Knowing from profiles & interviews I'd read that Harry Hay was still an undeterred communist - one of those who believed Communism hadn't really failed because "it had never really been tried" - I suspected he'd turn out to be an unbearable, harpy leftist.

Regardless, during Gay Pride Week, with my apartment filled with guests from Florida and Canada, & with Nelson spending the week as well, between nonstop outings to art galleries, plays & other events, I made a special effort to go wherever Harry would appear as an honored guest, panelist or otherwise. Still I never quite managed to intercept him & introduce myself. By week's end, I'd virtually given up.

June 26th dawned with the threat of a second Stonewall "riot" a distinct possibility. After much wrangling, the official march had gotten a permit to go up First Ave past the U N., across 57th Street and to hold a rally in Central Park .

Act-Up, charging the official internationally-organized march downplayed and marginalized AIDS, announced a second unauthorized march from the original Stonewall Bar in the Village up Fifth Avenue to Central Park .

Act-Up declared it had a constitutional right to march, that it would take 5th Ave by force if necessary. The N Y. Police Department said a second march blocking Fifth Ave would so tie up traffic that even emergency vehicles couldn't get through and threatened to forcefully deter them.

It certainly looked like Stonewall 25 could turn into Stonewall II . I might have missed the action in 1969, but for 1994 I was ready - armed with my video camera & an expired press tag dangling from a chain around my neck.

Act-Up's AIDS March attracted everyone excluded by the official march organizers as well as those who felt the rules against musical floats & vehicles were too repressive. After 15,000 people showed up, the police- seeking to avoid the threatened confrontation- gave them Fifth Avenue and an escort to move the group northward as quickly as possible to minimize traffic congestion .

My friends were disproportionately represented among the dissidents . Indeed, many of them were with Spirit of Stonewall (SOS), a dissident group within the alternative AIDS march itself .

Bill Dobbs, a lawyer, independent activist & master media manipulator who had helped me confront the NYPD about Marsha's mislabeled, mishandled murder, had formed SOS and invited NAMBLA (NorthAmerican Boy Lovers Assoc) to march with its banner in his contingent .

Dobbs, a civil libertarian, felt NAMBLA had been unfairly blacklisted and forbidden to march with its banner--like Communists in the 50's -- by the march organizers for public relations reasons and to fend off right-wing efforts to have the International Gay & Lesbian Association's (ILGA) application for official observer status at the U.N. denied.

Dobbs felt Stonewall 25 organizers had caved in to the straight establishment, seeking respectability & acceptance by sacrificing NAMBLA, censoring their ideas and negating legitimate arguments about rigid & unequally-enforced age of consent laws under which heterosexuals like Joey Buttafulco get a slap on the wrist - if that - while, in some states gays were imprisoned for life, even chemically castrated, for having consensual sex with a sixteen year old .

A few days later, nearly 90% of ILGA's members would indeed vote to expell NAMBLA . Nevertheless, a few weeks later, opposition by the Catholic Church & the Islamic countries would deny ILGA its observer status at the UN .

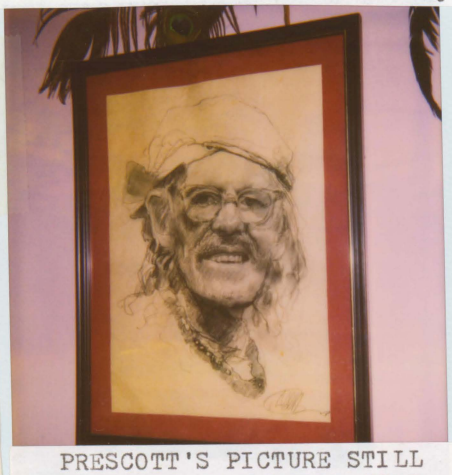
Joe McGrath, my friend since 1960 was with SOS carrying a picture of Prescott Townsend, an early Boston activist who was surely one of the most fantastic human beings I've ever known, someone who had been a great inspira--tion in my life .

I'd met Prescott in 1958 . He was in his early sixties. I was twenty. His was a happy full life filled with friends of all ages, sexes and orientations. Through him, I came to understand that a gay person could live a vibrant & exciting life into old age, thereby greatly reducing my own personal terror of growing old.

Prescott had a slogan, a trilogy, which he called the "keys to a happy life" - "LOVE. MONEY . UPLIFT" - I was charmed that he put "love" ahead of "money." And his definition of "uplift", i.e ."sublimating sadism into leadership and masochism into art" brilliantly dealt with the darker side of human nature in a purely positive way . I adopted "UPLIFT" as my business name and have used it since 1967 .

Although the idea might have been commendable, it was not the wisest business decision . Customers have difficulty remembering the name . The explanation is so complicated & long, I simply hand out an excerpt from an interview with Prescott when someone asks the origin of the name . On top of that are the endless jokes, even from bankers, that "Uplift sounds like a bra company !" Checks frequently get written to "Uplight Inc" and I get a lot of mail addressed to "Randy W. Uplift."

Prescott died in the early 70s. I had the honor of writing his obituary for The Advocate. June 26,1994 happened to have been Prescott Townsend's 100th birthday. Joe McGrath had decided to carry a poster with Prescott's picture on it during the Stonewall 25 March in his honor. I wonder if any of us, myself included, will so touch the lives of others that they will honor and celebrate our memory on our 100th birthday.



PRESCOTT'S PICTURE STILL HANGS IN AN HONORED SPOT IN MY HALLWAY. THIS WAS THE PORTRAIT JOE CARRIED.



A PHOTOGRAPHER WHO HAS PHOTOGRAPHED GAY ACTIVISTS FOR MANY YEARS TOOK THIS PORTRAIT OF ME UNDER UPLIFT'S TREASURE TROVE OF DECO LIGHTS

Accompanying both Joe McGrath & the NAMBLA contingent was another friend, James Dubrow, an award winning Canadian television journalist and author of a best-selling book on the Canadian Mafia. He too had brought his cam--corder & we had great fun filming & interviewing each other simultaneously.

Dubrow, now 47, had his first affair at age 14 with Tom Reeves, NAMBLA's founder. Now, 33 years later, they're still good friends and he describes Tom as someone "who has always been there for me." Despite being well known and successful, and in the public's eye, He publicly defends NAMBLA, insist--ing his relationship & involvement with Tom Reeves which began when he was fourteen has always been a positive & beneficial influence in his life.

So, my videotape which was originally going to document the second Stonewall riot-, capturing glazed-eyed cops beating in the skulls of emaciated AIDS patients, tearing the dresses off shrieking drag queens, clubbing lesbian mothers clutching their children - by degrees became a documentary in which good guy cops bent over backward to keep everybody happy and Mayor Guiliani out of hot water.

"Testing The Limits" had spent $1200 cleaning up a few hours of my early videos from 1971. They are the only surviving footage of early Gay Activists Alliance demonstrations & zaps & interviews at the second Gay Pride march. Excerpts from them have been incorporated in a documentary, "A Question of Equality", to finally be released in 1995.

I'd hoped for an encore but the document which resulted hardly resembled the one I intended. Tom Reeves asked permission to reproduce it a couple months later, which I willingly granted. Subsequently, he dropped me a thank you note saying he'd circulated 50 copies "worldwide." More significantly, a scholar/historian doing a book under contract with Holt Publishing & Jack Nichols considered it a "real historical document" because of the extended conversations it contained with Harry Hay.

As the AIDS March continued uptown, SOS - which had been marching right behind "Prostitutes of New York" (PONY), a disappointingly small and surprisingly unattractive crew - set off on its own across 30th Street. It had obtained a spot in the major parade up First Avenue. And just as Division 7 had confronted organizers of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1991 by inviting the Irish gay group to march as part of their contingent, SOS had invited Nambla & its 'banned' banner to be part of its group. Technically Stonewall 25 organizers could enlist the police's aid in physically removing it but Dobbs thought SOS's bluff would work. His point would be made. Nambla would march in the official parade, with its banner, past the UN.

At First Avenue, while waiting our turn to feed into the miles-long million-person procession, a gay couple who'd been friends for twenty years--very respectable middle-class professionals who had legally adopted a little baby girl -- came over & greeted me warmly. But when I told them I was with SOS & Nambla, they seemed startled and embarassed. Looking a bit paler, they quickly said goodbye & hurried back to their Gay Synagogue contingent.

Finally, Harry Hay appeared. His outfit was truly "Radical Faerie" shiek. With his long gray hair pulled back into a ponytail, he sported a dressy cranberry colored hat festooned with a rhinestone broach. A single triangular earring dangled from his left ear. A large African tribal neck-lace covered most of his chest. And from the waist down, over his jeans and reaching to the ground, he'd wrapped himself in a brightly colored bolt of rainbow-striped cloth such that it resembled a full length skirt.

"Randy Wicker!" Hay exclaimed after I timidly introduced myself. "I've been reading your writing, following your exploits for so many years. You were doing on the East Coast what I was doing on the West Coast!"

The warmth of Hay's welcome stunned me. I'd thought he might not even recognize my name.

"Give me a kiss," Harry chided. I gave him a quick peck on the cheek like you'd give an aunt or member of your family. "Good for nothing kisses" was what Marsha used to call them.

"That's not a kiss! Give me a real kiss!" Harry responded as I started to pull away. Then he pulled me forward for a full mouth-on-mouth somewhat tongue kiss.

I'd never been really kissed by an 82-yr-old man before, certainly not in the middle of a public street lined with hundreds of onlookers. Here I was, risking being mislabeled for life as a boy-lover by association, when in fact I was only getting sensual greetings from an 82-year-old. Where were the choirboys? Where were the Boy Scouts?



CoCo RAN INTO HARRY HAY ON CHRISTOPHER STREET & HELPED HIM FIND THE STORE. SHE WAS SO THRILLED TO MEET THE MAN SHE CALLED "THE FATHER & MOTHER OF GAY LIBERATION



SOS ORGANIZER BILL DOBBS VISITED WITH JOHN BURNSIDE & HARRY HAY AT UPLIFT A COUPLE DAYS AFTER THE MARCH

Harry wrapped his right arm around my left and we continued up the avenue together. The next couple hours were sheer magic. At the one rest stop along the way, I was able to videotape Harry and his lover, John Burnside, discussing the life they had shared with one another since 1963.

Continuing on toward Central Park, keeping my video camera running but holding it down low at arm's lenght so as not to be intrusive, Harry Hay & I swapped stories. We discussed our experiences, views and impressions of gay people & politics in the most rarified atmosphere of unique & weathered veterans.

Tom Reeves, Nambla's founded, walked nearby announcing to the crowd through his bullhorn: "And today Harry Hay, the founder of the American gay liberation movement, marches with SOS in solidarity with Nambla." Some onlookers, recognizing Nambla, hissed booed & shouted curses.

But for Harry Hay, even striding along with the gay community's greatest pariahs, there were only accolades: "Thank you!" "God Bless You!" And these were punctuated by personalized bursts of applause all along the way. I'd never seen such a truly universal outpouring of affection and respect for any other single gay leader.

Harry & John had a crammed schedule but they eagerly accepted my invitation to dinner a couple days later. Harry, 82, and John, 77, were charming, mentally stimulating and delightful company. Seeing the two of them -happy, lively, trim & fit, living full active lives - brought back warm memories of Prescott Townsend. For me, resigned to my expanded waistline and, at times, feeling exhausted & drained like I was sitting on death's doorstep at 57, they were sheer exhileration and much-needed inspiration.

"No! You're in control." John countered when I complained that I seemed to lack the motivation to diet. "You choose your pleasures in life. If food is one of them, fine. Make any choice you like but the choice is yours. YOU are always in control."

He proceeded to explain that whenever he got ten pounds over his best dancing weight -- he never danced professionally but dancing was his personal passion--he'd fast until the unwanted ten pounds were gone.

Experiencing Harry & John renewed my own desire to live healthily & happily into my 80s. After all, my celebrityhood was still just in its infancy and a friend had reminded me of Dawn Hampton's observation that: "If you live long enough, you will be famous. If you outlive everyone else, you will be a legend."

That dinner with Harry & John would be my last full meal for several months. During that time, I lost twenty pounds & returned to my lifelong adult weight of 175. I might still be a bit fat but I was well below the Federal Government's official classification of obesity. That was history!

Oh, how pathetic & useless a struggle it is for the middleaged/elderly obese to appear slim & young again. Also, how irresistible. Feeling lighter, more energetic & younger, wearing clothes I hadn't fit in for years, I con--sidered dying my hair.

I was hoping someone would talk me out of it. It would be much more embarassing to suddenly turn 'light ash brown' than it ever had been to face reality and slowly turn gray. But random polling of a dozen or more friends only unearthed a seething boiling caldron of virulent anti-gray prejudice.

"Why not? Go for it!" -- "Sure. Look good. Be vain!" -- "I was gray for six months & even my kids were thrilled when I got rid of it!" There was literally nothing but a chorus of encouragement.

No one spoke up for naturalness, for the nearly-luminious silvery beauty of my existing crown, for looking & acting one's age. Months later, two or three friends testified to such truths but, by then, it was too late.

My first few days of light-ash-brown life were terrifying. I shuddered every time I passed a mirror. My hair, my eyebrows, my moustache looked pitch black, like clumsy markings someone had inked in on a subway ad. I dreaded leaving the house. I just wanted to become invisible. But the truly strange thing was how hardly anyone commented - knowingly at least.

"Oh, you grew a moustache." The owner of an eatery I visited almost daily remarked.

"No. Always had it." I assured him. "Just dyed it." And thereby realizing my darker moustache stood out so much more, I decided to raze it.

"Actually, I like your new look." Andrew Glowko, my old friend & travel--ing companion volunteered, probably laying it on a bit thick. "Now you look like you did in 1979 when I first met you." Still, the deafening silence, the strictly-observed taboo against even mentioning a change in hair color on the part of nearly everyone infuriated me.

"You look different." The innocent repeat customer might venture, or even volunteer, just as naively, "I don't think you're the person I spoke to. I recall him being heavier, having gray hair."

"No, it was me." I'd correct them, provoking looks of unease & embarass--ment, "I just dyed my hair & lost twenty pounds."

"You look younger without your moustache." One woman commented. I wasn't fooled. I knew she was just using code words--talking about deceased mous--taches, unable to breach social taboos and speak openly about phony dyed hair.

Throughout the summer, the New York Public Library featured a huge, multi--room "Becoming Visible" exhibit about the history of the gay community in NYC. It included: photos of my kneeling by a New York Post truck advertising a "Sex & The Law" series I had been instrumental in; Fred McDarrah's shot of several of us from the Mattachine Society demanding service at Julius's Bar in the Village as self-identified homosexuals and setting into motion the court case which would declare the laws forbidding bars to serve homosexuals unconstitutional; the first VD leaflet which I had written & designed for the Public Health Department aimed at gays; and shots of the first public demon--stration for gay rights I'd organized outside the Whitehall Induction Center protesting the U.S. Army's treatment of gays: and, thanks to Craig Rodwell, even one of the placards I'd hand lettered & carried there.

On closing day, I videotaped the entire exhibition with the curators acting as guides. The preceeding evening, during a closing reception, Kay Tobin took some still photos of me in front of the exhibits. She'd also taken some pictures of Barbara Gittings, her lifetime companion, and myself at June's GAA reunion & in front of Uplift's window exhibit. The weight loss was certainly noticeable.



BARBARA GITTINGS & I AT THE GAA REUNION. HAD I REALLY GOTTEN THAT FAT??





TWO MONTHS LATER. AFTER JOHN'S ADVICE, I HAD TAKEN CONTROL OF MY LIFE AGAIN!

This past fall produced one last delightful surprise. I was presented with an award for caring for people with AIDS, for using my windows for memorials & announcements concerning AIDS, for employing people with AIDS. The "Mothers March Against AIDS" certificate conferred upon me that most flattering of all titles:"HONORARY MOTHER!"

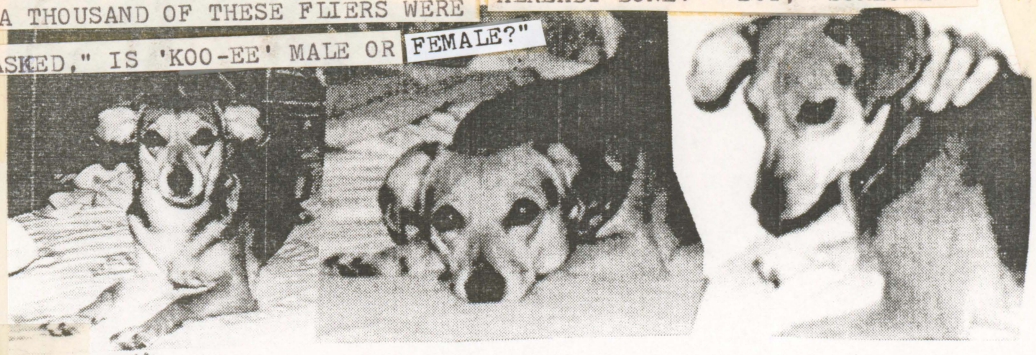
I suspect many folks, especially my employees, have ocassionally called me "mother" - among themselves & behind my back - for years. But thanks to a real living Saint, Beverly Rotter, a livewire mother support group activist and tireless PWA Coalition volunteer whose daughter, AIDS activist andwriter Iris De La Cruz lost her own battle with the disease a couple years ago, it's now official.

From now on, if anyone accuses me of having a macho complex or dares to call me a "male chauvinist pig", I have heavy duty proof of my innocence. I have my papers. I'm an HONORARY MOTHER!

On the home front, things have changed little. My apartment is a pig--sty, a disgrace to the middle class. All because I have doggedly continued my hopeless humanistic campaign to stamp out homelessness by taking in one lazy, messy, likeable, black HIV+ queen at a time. It's obvious that I'd rather live in a poorly kept house than in an empty one.

Adding agony to aggravation, CoCo disappeared with my dear dog Koo-ee, the only truly devoted warm body sharing my bed these days, last Labor Day weekend. I was convinced she'd been arrested. I became crazed, dashing from police precinct to precinct, from pound to pound. I papered the dog runs & parks with reward fliers--ironically missing the "hair event" of the year, WIGSTOCK 94. Even Andrew & his mother, Dotty, joined the search.

A THOUSAND OF THESE FLIERS WERE ALREADY DONE. "BUT," SOMEONE ASKED," IS 'KOO-EE' MALE OR FEMALE?"





DOTTY JOINED THE SEARCH !

9/3/94
Missing dog - "Koo-ee," 10 yrs old but looks like a puppy - white around nose - Tan face - black body. Small - about 10-14 pounds - Call 212-929-3632 12-8pm; 201-656-3280 (A.M. & Nite) Ask for Randy; lost in Village, East Village area - Reward - No questions asked - or come to 506 Hudson St 12-8pm - between Christopher & W 10th.

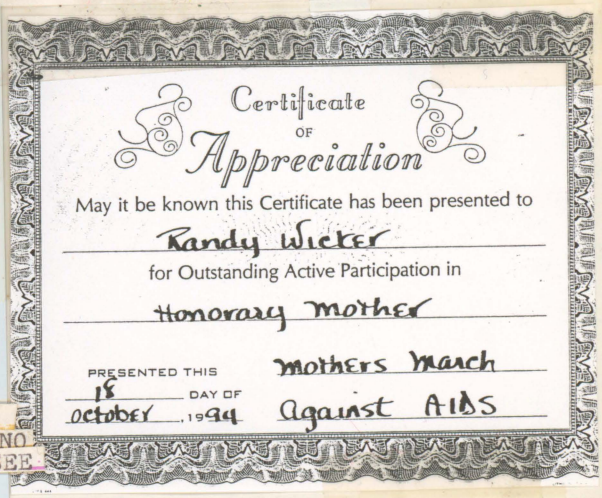
Thirty-six hours later, CoCo returned to Hoboken with Koo-ee in tow. She'd gone to Long Island for the weekend with a friend. Be forewarned! Be sensible! Don't take in any homeless person. You might soon need psychotherapy if you do!

As 1994 ends, the shop endures. Out of necessity, I've become my own decorator. My lease has been extended for five more years, delaying my escape from slavery until after the turn of the next century.

Fortunately, my new staff is superb! One of the newcomers is a young svelte 270-pound (down from 440 pounds) champion jazz saxophonist, a talented heterosexual misfit whose genial good spirits and great sense of humor help keep depression & life's other demons well at bay.



A STERLING CREW. TONY, ANDREW & CHRIS. A HARD WORKING BUNCH OF YOUNG MEN WITH NO UNHEALTHY HABITS - AS YOU CAN PLAINLY SEE.



Certificate of Appreciation

May it be known this Certificate has been presented to

Randy Wicker

for Outstanding Active Participation in

Honorary Mother

PRESENTED THIS 18 DAY OF October, 1994

Mothers March Against AIDS

Weight's down! Sales up! Spirits high! Damn it, time to get that book started (using a new word processor & laser printer), and that comedy career going.

It's never too late to go out there, have fun, make a fool of myself chasing after fame, fortune & young men in their twenties. Shucks, it's not over till it's over! Til next year...

Wishing you health & good fortune. As always, with love,

Randy Wicker
HONORARY MOTHER

Randy Wicker's
Uplift Inc.
506 Hudson Street
New York City, NY 10014

Randy Wicker
MVP #1, Apt. 10E
Hoboken, NJ 07030

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* This profile is reprinted from a March 12 ,1994 Annual Awards Dinner program, Southern Library for Social Studies and Research , entitled: "STONEWALL 25:A quarter century of Lesbian and Gay liberation and its origins in Southern California .

HARRY HAY

Though he is best known as the "Father of Gay Liberation" for calling forth the Mattachine Society in 1950, Harry Hay's activism dates from the early '30s. Jolted from family affluence by the Depression, he dropped out of Stanford for a career on the fringe of Hollywood. His affair with actor Will Geer introduced him to agitprop street theater and ultimately to a membership in the Communist Party.

Picket lines and demonstrations, including the 1934 General Strike in San Francisco, became a way of life. Harry organized field workers, investigated local slum ownership for the *People's World*, and raised money for the Workers Alliance and other trade unions.

While married (to Anita Platky, from 1938 to 1951), Harry taught political economy and developed other courses at the People's Education Center and the California Labor School. A passionate musicologist, he once defied Party orthodoxy and published a Marxist appreciation of jazz. With Earl Robinson, Mario Casetta and others, he created the West Coast branch of People's Songs.

His experience with the Left gave Harry the tools to create a lasting gay rights organization. Ironically, rebellion against the "Communist taint" of the Mattachine Society's founders hastened his departure from the organization. In 1955, after being called before the local HUAC and having great difficulty finding a lawyer to represent him, Harry retreated into study. Investigating the cross-cultural nature of homosexuality, he concentrated on Native American societies.

Through the 1960s, Harry participated in many homophile groups and was a founding member of the local Gay Liberation Front. But the campaign that caught most of his enthusiasm was the Committee for Traditional Indian Land and Life. This work inspired him and John Burnside, his life partner since 1963, to move in 1970 to New Mexico. While there, Harry helped lead a successful fight against a development project that would have dammed the Rio Grande and destroyed the agricultural basis of many local communities.

His 1976 paper, "A Separate People Whose Time Has Come," set forth his theory that gays are as differentiated by their consciousness as by their sexual behavior, an idea that led to his 1979 return to Southern California to help convene the first Spiritual Conference of Radical Faeries.

By the 1980s gay historians had discovered Harry, who remained active in numerous campaigns, including the Peace Information Exchange Network, Resist the Draft, and the Lavender Caucus of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. A highlight of his role as a gay elder statesman occurred during the last weeks of the Soviet Union, when Hay and Burnside attended the first gay conference there.

In 1990, Alyson Publications released his biography, Stuart Timmons' *The Trouble with Harry Hay: Founder of the Modern Gay Movement.* Harry is currently active in the Progressive Unity Council and People First,. and continues to pursue both cutting-edge gay politics and coalition work.

Well - marry Chirshass Amirca.

Well I had a most wonderfull year.

I Found a cusin who we have became a wonderfull Firend Kim.

I also had some SAd news. my aunt is dyeing of cancer of the Bload streame it is eating up he white Blood cell's. and the Bone marrow. AS of this Writing She is Fine.

Well another Firend of mine has Findy lost her battle aginst Aid's. Dec 15, 1994, mrs Jackie Scarsdale. Age 35 of the east Village. east 25t. She was Just a good Firend who did not care that I was gAy. or Black one of the First peop who took me in out of the cold That why I will aways. love her memorey, Jackie I Love you Sister.

3 I morn the lost of another Fired. mrs Violet Moore. my God mother I Love yous to mrs. moore.

well AS I said befor this has been a good yeare 1 of the highLight's of my year was meeting Mr Harry Hay's the Founding Father and mother of the gAy movement. the other highlight was Being thate when Randy Recived a award Frome "mother aginst Aid's," it made me Feel Real good to see Randy Recived the award.

But the Last highlight was the Aid's walk my Feet will never ~~bee~~ be the Same But it was worth every step.

I must SAY Farewell to a nother - Firend ms. Cris.
Cris was A Homeless Firend who die of t.B. on the Street's of New York.
But Some one Who gave love were ever He when it Farewell chis Farewell

as of this writeing my health is Fine.

So I Leve you with this.
When the windows of time
Seam's to deem.
You take All the love you
hAve Frome within. and Bring.
The winds of peac, Change To you.
Thare will come a day When
The crow meet's the dove

COCOA LUCAS.
1994.

(And rather than waste this space, thought I'd share Harry Hay's note with you. — Randy

Dear Randy;

Watching your VHS tapes, and reading your newsletters, my memory of that difficult long walk (for an old man of 82) followed by the devastating fall in the hot bath much later that night — is pretty much your smiling face and the firm and loving support of a strong left arm — on which I, more than occasionally leaned for support with gratitude.

I wish I had met you when I came at one of the Keynote Speakers - in Sheepshead Meadow - at Stonewall 20, in 1989. Because I would have had the chance to experience Mrs Marsha.

Be well, my dear. And continue to find new means to keep raising hell. The Assimilationists will lose the ship for us otherwise.

Love, Harry Hay

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