

# VISIONARY



Volume 2, Number 2

August, 1996

## Elders' Perch

### A PROUD MOMENT

It was more than a little challenging. And I did lose it once — scavenging for a rent-a-truck in Snellville — but that's another story. *This* is the story of the men of Gay Spirit Visions coming out to Atlanta and the world as a Spiritual Organization. Raven would have loved it. Did anyone notice him — lurking on a branch somewhere, perhaps?

To begin at the beginning, the AIDS Vigil at John Howell Park — organized by Magic Boy and others — on Friday night was as much magic as I have ever seen us create. Sacred Brothers greeted people as the sun dipped toward the city skyline. Names were read from the dais. Photos of sacred elders who have completed this phase of their journey were lined up on either side of the dais. "Remember them with your vote," someone said. The Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus graced the evening air with their solemn voices. Our circle was safe enough for recently grieving families to find support and comfort during the open mic. Karen Ashby, an AIDS-infected lesbian, stood in living refute of the myth so many would prefer to believe. She said she had once agreed to allow AIDS to be in her body but that it was still *HER* body! I needed to hear that amidst my memories of Mike, Charlie, Porter, Randy G., Bill, Rick, Steve, Steven, Andy, Lee, Leigh, Jeff, and all the others, some of whom I didn't know had passed until I saw their photo or heard their names.

Speaker after speaker, song after song, we touched and felt our sadness, rage, fear, and hope. When Magic Boy led a ritual of recommitment to action, over 350 of us wrote down our intention to act at home, in school, at work, or in the larger community in honor of the memory of those we have loved and lost.

Then with prayers that we be strengthened to meet the challenges ahead, we burned our intentions in the Sacred Fire. When the circle was reformed, *all the way around the edge of the park*, and our candles were lit, it was *our* Spirit-Magic in a mixed crowd! Brothers, take a breath!

I guess the day before Jesus entered Jerusalem on that triumphant donkey ride, the donkey trainer must have been out in the fields all afternoon trying to get the donkey to cooperate. In other words, acquiring the elements of the float was a challenge. Thank Goddess for Sacred Brother Don's companionship, or I would have been completely lost. It reminded me that the work of the sacred elder is to deal with the linear world. It was an interesting "desert" experience for those into spiritual deprivation. And I honor those who toiled in the heat to hold our space in the booth.

Late Sunday morning we gathered outside the MARTA Civic Center station to create our first-ever Pride float: bamboo, banners, drums, fabric, hand-painted protest signs that said "Create Sacred Spaces!" "Defend Sacred Spaces!" "Black Churches are Sacred Spaces!" "Queer Spaces are Sacred Spaces!" along with a few bales of

## Upcoming Dates

[Note: AFMH = Atlanta Friends Meeting House, 701 W. Howard Ave., Decatur]

**August 10, 10:00am:** GSV Planning Meeting @ AFMH

**August 31, 10:00am:** GSV Planning Meeting @ AFMH

**TBA:** Final Conference planning meeting

**September 20-22:** 7th Annual Celebrating Gay Spirit Visions conference, *the mountain*, Highlands, NC

**October 19, 10:00am:** GSV Planning Meeting @ AFMH

**November 9, 10:00am:** GSV Planning Meeting @ AFMH

**December 14, 10:00am:** GSV Planning Meeting @ AFMH

**TBA:** Seasonal party

**December 22 :** 1st Anniversary of GSV incorporation, i.e., our birthday!

wheat straw, some duct tape and twine and, of course, Spirit!

What a sight to behold! And the sound of the drums through the canyons of Peachtree Street was thunderous! The

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### VISIONARY

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float caught the attention of a group of Faeries, who suddenly swarmed, stirring the energy and drawing more and more adulation toward us, with Green Man atop it all, as I negotiated the float through the crowds. The response was exuberant as cameras clicked all along the parade route. "Go ahead and drive it down the middle of the road. It's all yours!" shouted the Pride Security volunteer. I did.

What I saw at the booth in the Market was Sacred Brothers telling people about us in their own words. Free ice water on a hot day. Shade and a chair for a few moments. A carefully packed booth to break down on Sunday evening. (Thank you secret brothers.) When I later acknowledged a Pride operations volunteer for a successful weekend, she said she was glad we made a profit. I had to tell her that we came not to sell anything but to give away what we had to offer and that I felt we had been well received.

And so our work begins.

We take action in the world. We offer a space where Men-Loving Men can be nurtured and healed of their spiritual wounds. We offer a method for people to be with one another in mutually supportive ways, ways that open our hearts for Spirit to come in and do the real healing work that needs to be done in our lives and on our Planet. We prepare to gather in conference on *the mountain* to offer our healing and to teach others about our ways so that they too can take action in their worlds. As I look back over this time in our history, I see the beginning of a spark of consciousness, another protest sign, "ALL Sexual Spaces Are Sacred Spaces!"

Join me in remembering this time and our association as a proud moment for our community. It was a proud moment for me. Thank you.

Treewalker

Δ

## GREEN MAN SPEAKS

Green Man wishes to express his thanks for being asked to ride on the GSV float in the Pride Parade and also to offer his gratitude for the opportunity to relish and revel in the experience of being a Prom Queen. The healing energies of

recognition and acceptance flowed back and forth from the crowd to yours truly. Bless you, everyone. Δ

## TRIBAL PRIDE EMBRACES TOLERANCE

by Dancing Dolphin  
(Gerry Mitchell)

A friend of mine shared with me this vignette while participating in Chicago's Gay Pride. Towards the end of the day, walking home, they were approached by two transvestites dressed to the hilt — fishnets, heels, glitter, boas, wigs. Henry, the four year old, looked at one, then the other and said, "You're late!"

I wish more parents encouraged their children to remain open. The tolerance, or lack of it, we learn as children affects deeply the rest of our lives. It continues to amaze me how intolerant we sometimes are of others not demonstrating our values, even within our own community. You would think that a community seeking greater tolerance would have learned to be tolerant. Instead, examples of intolerance abound in our own community ironically even at the Pride Celebrations. Not saying that there wasn't a sense of unity and community at our Pride Celebration, but there was a subtext of being proud of your brand of gayness while being intolerant of other expressions.

For Atlanta Pride, I was proudly with my Gay Spirit Visions tribe. I met our contingent down at the Civic Center at noon. We had a truck and trailer piled high with loving energy. We had Green Man in a thicket of bamboo. We had the trailer wall to wall with a tribal drum ensemble. We had more brothers on foot carrying banners and signs defending sacred spaces, queer spaces, black churches, and our sacredness in the streets. The radical faeries' energy was drawn to our drums and melted into ours in the Georgia sun. Festive men in skirts, sixties mod polyester stretch tops and bell bottoms, and hair of rainbow colors danced and swirled on blades a web of love sewing cords of light to the crowds as we weaved down the street.

I believe our energy uniquely touched the crowd. I believe people are hungry to see this expression of spirit, diverse men exploring spirituality together in a very connected way. I believe this is particularly appealing as it exists outside the context of the churches that frequently have judged and condemned the gay community. It was inspiring to see a strong show of support, the cups of water and the garden hoses offered by churches along the parade route.

After an hour of drumming (in the sun at 95 degrees) we arrived, closed our circle with sage and carried our spirit into Piedmont Park. GSV maintained a tent all weekend sharing with interested and guided parties who inquired of our work. Again it was great to have the Art Faeries of IDA at our side, sharing the adjoining tent. I was once again clearly convinced I was exactly where I needed to be. Being able to suspend judgment, I was not only able to share our message but was open to several messages that were meant to come my way by seemingly unlikely messengers.

I am grateful for GSV and the sacred space they create that gives me a joyful context in which to live as a spirit servant seeking same — a group of men who have greatly helped me grow spiritually by modeling honor of my brothers' path. This is a tremendous gift for as I have learned to honor my brothers path, I have learned to suspend judgment of myself loving and honoring my own path.

I would challenge my brothers not only to tolerate but to take pride in their ability to honor the diverse expressions of humanness in yourself and others, in our community, and in the community at large. I take pride in walking the line between gym buff and radical faerie, housewife and healer. Part of my job here on this planet is to blur the lines of separation and connect energy. I love to feel fit and strong but yet I am comfortable presenting that energy in a sarong. I may be more apt to wear boots with my skirt instead of heels, but that doesn't make me less than a drag queen!

For me as a healer it is all about energy. It's easy for me to see that there are persons out of balance presenting as gym bunnies as well as in our own camp of men who love men exploring spirituality. The danger comes in the tendency to

stereotype, to pigeon-hole our brothers and sisters. Again, I just think we come together when we stop seeing what reinforces the illusion of separateness and focusing on what makes us one. It remains my prayer that we come to truly embrace our diversity and give thanks for so many shining examples, facets of one mighty gem of God/Goddess energy.

Within our tribe, tolerance comes relatively easy. The challenge is greater as we venture outside our smaller circle. Our challenge is in modeling our pride and tolerance not just in our community but for the larger community. To see the Christ, Buddha, God/Goddess energy in each on our path. In tolerance, be open to the message from the unlikely messenger. That is life work that heals the global community by our tribal example. That is our shared sacred expression for which we can be proud. Δ

## Proud Pride Reflections

by Joe Chancey

Queer Pride celebrations have always been about two things for me — choices and connections. And the choices I make determine the kinds of connections I make. This year was no exception. Should I march with the Gay Spirit Visions group, my church group, Bet Haverim, the guys from GANG, or perhaps renew my connection with Black and White Men Together? Whatever I chose I would miss something else.

I narrowed it down to two: either the Spirit Visions float or my church, and opted for the church group. Some of the supportive non-gay groups at the church were going to have people marching and I figured there had better be a good showing from us queers. As we stepped off behind P-FLAG, which had several of our church folk in their contingent, I introduced myself to an older woman who was carrying a gay rainbow flag. I recognized her name, but had never met her before. She said to me, "This is so wonderful, I'm crying. But the weirdness bothers me." I immediately realized that this was not the time for a lecture on political correctness, since (1) I've grown tired of the concept and prefer to have my own opinions whether they are PC or not; (2) despite whatever misgivings she might have had she was there and that counted for one hell of a lot; and (3) the

lady was old enough to be my mother and being a good little boy from the heartland I was taught to respect my elders. Her joy was infectious.

George, the man who organized our group, had gone to the Disney store and gotten Mouseketeer hats for us to wear. They were quite a hit, as we yelled, "Go to Disney World for your honeymoon!" Near the end of the parade route I saw a cute young man with a big sign about going to Disney World. George walked over, pulled an extra pair of mouse ears out of his bag and put them on the young man's head. He immediately turned into an ecstatic little boy, jumping up and down with joy having obviously gotten something that he had always wanted. The joy, again, was infectious.

I wasn't scheduled to staff the GSV booth on Sunday; but after I got to the end of the parade, it seemed the place to be. I wound up staying well into the afternoon. And our tent was the place to be for many people, both for Spirit Visions folks to hang out and for people stopping by for ice water, conversation, and information. The ice water was a big hit, and for some people I think it was also an ice breaker, giving them an excuse to ask us about what we do.

Lest my exuberance make me sound like some kind of Gay Pride virgin, I will show my age by telling you that this was the twentieth year that I have observed Gay Pride in some fashion. In 1976 I marched with The Council on Religion and the Homosexual in two parades in San Francisco. On a beautiful Sunday afternoon we marched first in the Bicentennial Interfaith Parade and then in the annual Gay Pride March/Parade. It was a heady experience for someone still living in a rural area and just two years into the coming out process. And I remember the celebrations here in Atlanta just a few years back when the attendance of a few hundred people was considered a success.

But as important as large numbers of people are for an event like Pride, they do not tell the whole story. If people do not connect with what is happening in a meaningful way, then the experience is lost. So to everyone

who had anything to do with Pride '96, I say, "Thank you for helping me make the connection." Special thanks if you helped with GSV happenings: The AIDS vigil (we were a co-sponsor), our booth, and the float.

And finally I want to thank Todd "Magic Boy" Kinney for all the work he did beginning way back last year on behalf of GSV for this year's Pride events. Todd started attending Pride Committee organizing meetings last fall and bringing the GSV Planning Committee reports on what was being planned as well as ideas for what we could do. At times, Todd's many suggestions about it seemed a bit much, but in the end, I want to thank Magic Boy for the extra magic in Pride '96. Δ

## On the Importance of Flaunting

by John R. Stowe

I wore a dress this year for Pride. Right there on Peachtree Street, in front of God and the Baptists and everybody. Blades, too. And a bright red wig. "Belle on Wheels," I called her. She felt flawless.

Logistics were a challenge. The half-resurfaced road asphalt was rough for a girl in wheels, and locating a Porta-potty wide enough for a hoop skirt ain't easy in the nineties. Finally found one marked "Differently-abled," down by the lake.

The rewards were more than worth it. We are a beautiful, exuberant people. Dancing cowboys and gardening dykes cheered a man on stilts in a ten foot skirt. A pinkrobed Sister talked with the mayor, and concerned queens offered help for the jewelry impaired. Soaking it in made a soul want to fly!

Rolling the length of the parade was an entertaining chore. It was long — nearly 200,000 people, the papers say. I remember the days when it was 200, and the press didn't even notice.

People respond differently to a man in a dress. Most smile. Some cheer, "Get it, girl!" or "Hey, Babe!" like we're best friends already. They've been here, or want to, I can tell.

Others, though, as soon as they catch a glimpse, look at the ground, quickly. Not meaning to put words in someone else's mouth, but if you ask me, they're

afraid. I've been there, too.

Scared, like back in the old days, when we shouted our chants, trying hard to sound bigger than we felt. "Two four six eight, Gay is just as good as straight!" Convincing whom? "Them"? Or ourselves?

I spent lots of years trying to fit in, figuring the real me wasn't fit to be seen. When I finally came out, I worked hard to be Gay-but-not-too-queer. "Okay," I bargained, "I'll be a good faggot. I won't shock you. Just, please, tell me you like me."

Two hundred thousand queers in the street, and still the old fear. Even in the dress, I hear it whisper, "Conform. Be normal. Fit in."

Normal doesn't work. It always comes out lowest common denominator, like dying your hair mousy when it's really scarlet. Too much conforming, and we end up sanitized and sexless, like the white bread "Gays" in mainstream films that don't even kiss, much less fuck.

To the soul, conformity kills. Souls feed on energy and continued growth, unfolding like flowers in the morning sun. Trying to suit everyone else is like walking into a garden and declaring that every flower has to be a rose. Fine, if you happen to be one. If you're a daffodil, though, or a dandelion, it's death by drought.

At Pride, I see life reflected by the men of Gay Spirit. Atop the float, Green Man dances to the beat of drums. A man in skins hugs another in silk. A wood nymph cavorts beside a leather faerie. Our signs defend the importance of sacred space. Each costume states the truth of another soul.

It's not all about outrageous costumes. Lots of men here look quite "normal." What matters is the motivation. If choices — of behavior, appearance, expression — come from fear, the soul withers. If they come from core, as an expression of wholeness, the soul thrives.

Push the envelope. Strut your stuff. Flaunt your fabulousity. Expand the limits. Find a place that's calling and go there. That's what feeds you where you live.

Where's your growing edge? When you listen inside, what calls? My friend Rudy pierced his left nipple in a midnight

ritual. Jeffrey learned country dancing. Bill took up piano. Chuck volunteers at hospice. Marty practices tai chi. Sam watches sunrise from his porch each morning. Every step, however small, gives the soul more space.

You know, blading as Belle isn't my calling in life. — But it was a step, and it was fun. I felt good for a week. Now, with the pictures already fading, my question is, "What's next?"

How about you? "What's next?" Ask your soul. Δ

## A SPIRITUAL HOME

by Dandelion  
Third in a series

Today we are very fortunate in the wide variety of information and instructional material that is available to aide and inspire us on our spiritual journeys. The easy access that most of us have to books, ritual objects, workshops, and the like may cause us to forget that even fifteen years ago these things were not nearly as easy to come by as they are today. The eclectic and even esoteric knowledge that is as close as the nearest New Age bookstore, or mail-order catalog, makes the world an exciting place for the spiritually adventurous.

While our studies are no longer limited to Judeo-Christian subject matter there is one thing that is often still hard to find — a spiritual home. It is not necessary to have outside validation for your beliefs, but it helps. I had much of my own personal philosophy already worked out in my mind, but I hardly had the courage to actually believe it. Were it not for Mark Thompson's book, *Gay Spirit: Myth and Meaning*, and the mentor who told me to read it, I doubt I would take my own beliefs nearly as seriously as I do. I owe both those men a great debt of gratitude. Even reading books is not enough though. Spirituality is a very ephemeral thing. This is even more true if you are following a contemporary path and don't have thousands of years of tradition to bolster your faith.

The difficulty you will have in finding a circle of fellow believers will depend on the path you follow and where you live. It is rarely impossible to find some one, though.

One level of home for me is the pilgrimages that I go on, to Short Mountain, as well as the GSV conference. Thinking of these trips as pilgrimages means that these places become holy sites that I can return to in my mind later and the circle of friends that meet there remains unbroken, in my heart. If you go to one of these, or some other conference or retreat, as well as being an opportunity to learn and practice new spiritual skills, explore the possibility to network with other people. This may be the only chance you have to meet a like minded spirit from your own area that you might never find back home.

Closer to home I have several spiritual groups that meet semi-regularly. One of these is just getting started, and I have waited for years for it to come together so if finding your spiritual home seems difficult at first don't give up hope. Size is not important either, as Jesus of Nazareth said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am with them." The important thing is some one to share with, explore with, and commune with. Today there are even cybercovens, and cyber-churches on the computer networks. I have no experience with this, but I can't imagine it is the same as a warm hand to hold and love sparkling in a brother's eyes, though even a thin thread of spirit flickering on a computer screen is a place to begin. Δ

## BUSINESS ISSUES

by Al Cotton

1. Our voice mail provider has proven unreliable, and we are in the process of choosing another. We will let you know the results in the next *Visionary*, and we apologize if any of your long-distance calls to that number have gone unanswered.

2. Please note that meeting times in Atlanta for the next few months will be irregular, due to increased weekend activity at Atlanta Friends Meeting.

3. I am coordinating the workshops for this fall's conference. We have received at least a dozen tentative workshop proposals from our Skills Survey, and would love to hear from anyone else planning on attending the Fall Conference who wants to offer a workshop.

Here's the information we need from

you: (1) the title of your proposed workshop; (2) an explanation of how it ties into this year's theme, "Taking Action in the World: Our Work Begins"; (3) the proposed length (both ideal and shortest possible); (4) the projected number of participants (both optimal and maximum attendance); and (5) a one-paragraph description of how the workshop will be conducted, what the workshop's goals are, etc. — what the conference-goer needs to know in deciding whether to choose the workshop or not. (This paragraph will appear in edited form in the Conference program.) Also list any special needs for your workshop — space-wise, equipment-wise, etc. The longest workshop slot will be 90 minutes, but we expect to have several 45 minute workshop slots as well.

Send your proposal to GSV Workshops, 638 Stratford Green, Avondale Estates, GA 30002, or send it via e-mail to GSVGSV@AOL.COM. If you have any questions, you can reach me at 404/292-8567. Δ

## A MESSAGE FROM ANDREW RAMER

From the moment I leave *the mountain* each year, I am moving toward the next year's gathering. All year, by phone, letter, telepathy, and dream I am participating in conversations with you, absorbing ideas and weaving them into the future. This year's theme excites me. It's the fulfillment of a vision that Raven shared with me before his death of how and where the conference would evolve. As we move toward our gathering, I invite us all to deepen in the vision — of a tribe of gay men committed to using our talents and genius for ourselves and for the world. We are born to be planetary transformers, each in our own way. And now more than ever, the planet needs us. Let us honor, celebrate, ground, and move forward with our dreams. In love and peace, until we meet on *the mountain*. Δ

## FAIRY TALE

by John Stowe

Two children found a fairy in the back yard. It was caught in a very big spider web beneath the holly tree by the

Miller's fence. The boy, whose name was Billy Williams, saw it first. "Whoa!" he yelled. "What a weird bug!" He grabbed the faintly glowing figure with both hands and ripped it free from the sticky strands of the web. "It looks like a miniature person. I'm gonna pull its wings off."

His younger sister, Emmaline, ran up. "No!" she cried. "Don't hurt it! It's not a bug, Billy, it's a fairy. Look how pretty it is!" She tried to grab it, but Billy jerked his arm away. The little creature slipped from his hand and fell into the dry holly leaves at their feet. "Oh no," wailed Emma. "Now you've killed it!"

They knelt beside the tiny figure. Its light flickered tentatively, as if to go out, and one of the wings was bent beneath it.

"I didn't kill it, you dummy. It's still breathing." Billy rose authoritatively. "Go get a jar from the garage. We can put it in there." Emma ran off, while Billy stood guard. After all, he had found this fairy, and no one else was gonna take it, even if it did die. He didn't know anybody who had a real fairy, even Tony Pinkerton whose parents gave him a remote control airplane for his tenth birthday.

Emma returned with the jar and they put the fairy inside. Billy screwed the metal lid on tight, just to be extra sure, but Emma made him get a nail and put some air holes in the top.

"Let's take it to the clubhouse," Emma suggested. "We can keep it there, and maybe Susan will know how to make it better. She's in Science Club and knows all sorts of things." Billy didn't like the idea of bringing anyone else in on his find, but Susan was in the club and sure to find out anyway. Besides, he figured, a live fairy was a bigger deal than a dead one. He ran next door to Susan's house, while Emma took the fairy to the small playhouse in the back lot. "P-R-I-V-A-T-E," it said, in big red letters on the door.

"Most interesting," pronounced Susan Miller, as she peered through a gigantic magnifying glass. She had the fairy under a hot, bright light and was studying it intensely. Her tortoiseshell-rimmed glasses made shiny reflections

on the tabletop. "Look how long its legs are, and the vein patterns in the wings are very similar to the ones on the cicada we caught for our science project. We put it in naphtha and pinned it in our butterfly display. Mrs. Kretchmer said ours was the best project in the whole class."

"That's great. But what shall we do now?" questioned Emma. "We need to feed it or it'll die. And give it water, just like when we had Billy's hamster."

"Right," agreed Susan, putting down her magnifier. "Billy, put some grass in the bottom of the jar, and Emma, you get some flowers from your mother's garden. I'll get water in this little cup."

The children scampered to their tasks. When they were finished they agreed not to tell anyone about the fairy until they could decide what to do with it. They left the jar on the table overnight, and Billy gave the lid an extra twist before he left.

The next morning was Saturday. The fairy was doing better. It had flown to the top of the jar and was resting on one of the longer blades of grass. The children weren't looking at it though. They sat across the room around Susan's black beanbag cushion, intent on each other.

"It's my fairy, you two," Billy argued. "I say we keep it in the hamster cage and teach it tricks. We can charge everybody to come and see it."

"No!" protested Susan. "This is an important scientific discovery. I need to study its habits and read about fairies in the library. This will be a great science fair project."

Emma stomped her foot, startling the others. "Don't you guys see? This is a *real* fairy. It's soooo cuuute. We should tame it and pet it and show everybody how pretty it is. Just like Tinkerbelle and Bambi."

A small knock at the playhouse door made them all jump. Billy ran to cover the jar just as a curly headed five year old padded in. He clutched an old stuffed dog wrapped in a torn silk scarf. "Su-sue?" he asked, uncertain. "Su-sue!" He ran across the room and hugged Susan's knees.

"Oh darn," said Susan. "Mother said I have to watch Jaimey today. I forgot."

"That little sissy?" sneered Billy. "He can't come in here. This club's only for big kids, not babies with stuffed dogs."

"He has to Billy, or I can't stay either."

"Sit over there, Jaimey," Emma settled it. "Be quiet. And don't bother the fairy." Turning to her brother, she got back to business, "Billy, you can't own this fairy. We found it together. Now, I think..."

Jaimey didn't hear another word. His eyes were glued to the jar over his head on the table. As he climbed onto the old stuffed chair, the fairy watched him. It fluttered on the grass stem as the table jarred slightly, then settled.

Jaimey pressed his face to the glass, mesmerized. Shimmery wings, silvery hair, satin skin. The little boy's face shined with wonder. Green eyes, dancing alive, flecked with blue and gold and silver. Jaimey stared, entranced. His dog Ralphie, unnoticed, slipped from its scarf to the floor.

The older children continued, oblivious, "ought to have a special assembly just for us ... sooo pretty ... wonder how fast it can fly ... maybe we can dissect it..." Jaimey pressed closer.

"What's your name fairy?" he whispered. "Where do you live?" He listened intently, then began to smile softly. "Don't be afraid, little fairy."

"Get away from that jar, Baby! Get down! You'll hurt our fairy." Jaimey, startled, clambered from the table and clutched at Ralphie. He blinked back tears as Susan grabbed his hand and hustled him out of the clubhouse.

That afternoon, Billy had Little League practice and Mrs. Williams took Susan and Emmaline to the mall to shop for new school skirts. Jaimey Miller told his momma he and Ralphie were gonna make roads in the sandbox, but once he heard her go back to the laundry room, he scampered across the yard to the big kids' clubhouse. It took his whole weight to open the door, and his heart pounded in terror as he entered the forbidden room.

The fairy was still in its jar, glowing softly when Jaimey climbed the chair and lifted the cloth cover. It regarded him quietly, deep green eyes shiny like dragonfly scales. Jaimey had to use both his small hands to open the lid and set it on the table. "Nobody asked you, did they fairy?"

The tiny being stretched its wings a

moment, then flitted out of the jar. It flashed once over Jaimey's head, a bright little star against the ceiling, then streaked out the door. Something shiny glittered in Jaimey's hair as he jumped from the table and ran outside.

Seventeen years later, a dressing room door slams open. A young man, the new stage manager, springs inside. "Come on, Doll, hurry up! The place is full. They're gonna get rowdy." The man is nervous, big wet blotches already staining his pressed white tee shirt. It's his first job.

With exaggerated leisure, the performer stands and turns for one final check in the mirror. Tall, slim figure, sheathed in clingy emerald, silver blonde hair swept off delicate neck. Tall, tall heels.

The stage manager, taken aback, inhales a shuddery breath. "Girl, you look gorgeous. How'd you get those eyes so green? Go give it to 'em, honey. They'll eat it up!"

With a shattering smile, the performer slides into a feathered cape, then slinks across the short hallway to the smoky stage beyond. The audience, catching sight of its idol, chants its approval. "JAY-MEE! JAY-MEE!"

As the music begins, the performer rustles the feathered cape, smiles one deep breath, and shimmers into the brilliant lights. Δ

## A TABOO EXHIBIT

King Thackston, one of the founders and co-curators of the "Bad Boy" art group TABOO invites you to attend the premiere of his new work at TABOO's "Gone with the Wind — The Fabrication and Denial of Southern Identity" at the City Gallery at Chastain, Atlanta, July 14-Sep. 20, 1996. Information 404/688-8234. Δ

## A FAREWELL

My dear brothers,

The time has come for me to take my leave of you.

The time I have spent among you has been a profound honour. I have known so many of you so well, and learned so many loving gifts that I am ashamed to offer a farewell address.

Among those gifts, I am profoundly honored that Fate chose me first as one of our elders at council. I remind you of this only to impress upon you the sense of loving duty that I have felt, and the joy I found in giving it my best and highest. You must do the same.

Your brotherhood is very dear to me; it was what I had always hoped to find. I did not find it in Tau Kappa Epsilon, or the United States Air Force, or the Georgia Society of Certified Public Accountants. So many men kick around this term of "brotherhood," yet so few have ever had the good fortune to find it honoured so well.

*Let me say that our system of government does not copy the institutions of our neighbors. Rather, we are a model to them. Ours is democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority, but of the whole people.... We are free and tolerant in our private lives... When our work is over, we enjoy all kinds of recreations for our spirits... Our love of beauty does not lead to extravagance; our love of things of the mind does not make us soft.... As for poverty, no one need be shamed to admit it... We can take risks, and we can estimate them beforehand. The brave man knows what is sweet in life, and what is terrible, and then goes out undeterred to meet it.*

These words are not mine but Pericles', in his Funeral Oration. But is this not what we do, what we have always done? Are we not Uncle Walt's City of Brotherhood? Who better can carry that ancient torch than the Queer Sons of Turtle Island?

So why, you may well ask, do I choose to distance myself from such a noble fraternity?

The reasons are personal, but I will share a few with you: First, the natural climate of the desert calls me, with its sun and heat; I am a brother of Apollo, and the winters here reduce me to misery. Further, that harsh, bright climate makes people energetic, and I like that; it suits my demanding spirit. Finally, it leads them to be fiercely independent, as we as gay men have always been; and that is my politics. Diversity is good and desirable, but independence is essential. Insist on yourself.

For once I am going to follow my own bliss, and write my hopeless(?)

## EXCERPTS FROM LAST YEAR'S OPENING RITUAL

by Bernhard Zinkgraf

### PROCESSIONAL CHANT

Come in, you gay men, faggots, and faeries;  
poofers and queens and boys called Mary.  
Radical leathermen, daddys and boys;  
top men, bottom men, Old Guard, and New.  
Sissies and clones, boys who throw like a girl;  
limp wristed, queer as a three dollar bill.  
Urnings, Uranians, inverters and intermediates;  
Isophils, sodomites and comrades in arms.  
Nelly boys and strange ones, A-gays and drag queens;  
Size queens, horny men, game for anything.  
Artistic, creative, Homophiles and heretics;  
activists, pansies, all Friends of Dorothy.  
Scouts and Flute players, Shamans and Hunters;  
Walks-between Priests of Father Earth and Mother Sky.

### THE INVOCATION SEQUENCE

We gather in council on this sacred mountain  
and Come In to this place where paths converge;  
Where Father Earth proudly reaches up  
and Mother Sky bends down in loving embrace.

At this sacred time of balance  
We convene our Sacred Lodge.  
And we ask All our Relations  
to support us on our journey.

Please face the East with me, and say: HO!  
*And all repeat: HO!*

Spirit keepers of the East;  
Ancestors of the Scout clan:  
Come in, be here with us.

Golden Eagle, flying higher than the rest,  
bringer of clarity and wisdom:  
Help us to awaken to things within and without.

Archangel Uriel, protector of the East,  
of morning and rising sun,  
of spring and new beginnings:  
Protect us as our souls journey out.

HO!

Please face the South with me, and say: HO!  
*And all repeat: HO!*

Spirit keepers of the South;  
Ancestors of the Flute Player clan:  
Come in, be here with us.

Coyote, teacher and trickster,  
bringer of joy, growth and trust:  
Help us to be both firm and yielding,  
and guide us on our two spirit path.

Archangel Gabriel, protector of the South,  
of the summer's heat and midday brightness:  
Protect us on our walks-between journey.

HO!

Please face the West with me, and say: HO!  
*And all repeat: HO!*

Spirit keepers of the West;  
Ancestors of the Shaman clan:  
Come in, be here with us.

Grizzly Bear, strong and gentle,  
deliberate and introspective:  
Strengthen and empower us  
as we survive loss and change.

Archangel Raphael, protector of the West,  
of autumn and the sun's daily setting:  
Protect us in our journey toward wholeness.

HO!

Please face the North with me, and say: HO!  
*And all repeat: HO!*

Spirit keepers of the North;  
Ancestors of the Hunter clan:  
Come in, be here with us.

White Buffalo, generous and sharing:  
Renew us and purify us and the gifts  
we offer to those boys who follow.

Archangel Michael, protector of the North,  
of the dark of night and cold of winter,  
of secret growth under blankets of snow:  
Protect us in our elder journey.

HO!

books in the desert. But our campaign is  
far from over, and I take the flame you  
have lit within me.

My departure must only make you  
more responsible and intentional. Serve  
your duty to your brothers well when you  
are called upon and find in it the joy I  
have.

I love you and support you on your  
journey.

Ευχαριστο πολυ, οι αδελφι μου.

[Thanks very, brothers mine.]

Γεια σας,

Επαμεινωνδας

(E.S.H. Coppock)

Δ

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