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MEDIA RELEASE

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New Online Exhibition Explores 50 Years of Groundbreaking LGBTQ Newspaper Bay Area Reporter

San Francisco — A new online exhibition hosted by the GLBT Historical Society and curated by photojournalist Rick Gerharter will examine the history of the *Bay Area Reporter* (BAR) on the occasion of the paper’s 50th anniversary. The oldest continuously published LGBTQ newspaper in the United States, the BAR has been serving the San Francisco Bay Area since 1971. *Stories of Our Movement: The Bay Area Reporter at 50* will display digitized pages of the paper, with links to full issues, photographs, testimonials and other audiovisual materials. The exhibition is made possible by generous support from the Bob Ross Foundation, and opens on the GLBT Historical Society’s website on April 26, 2021.

From its very first issue on April 1, 1971 — adorned with a smiling clown face and inviting readers to “meet your friends” at a fundraiser called “Circus Circus” — to its coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Bay Area Reporter* has positioned itself as an invaluable source of news, site of information exchange and tool of community-building for the LGBTQ community. Over its half-century lifespan, the publication has evolved along with its readers and the community itself. It has become increasingly professionalized, with improved production quality and color printing, has expanded its audiences and has successfully broadened its coverage. After five decades, the paper has undergone a transformation from being primarily a bar-focused, community niche paper to a publication serving San Francisco, the Bay Area, California and ultimately a newspaper of national and international consequence — all while maintaining its LGBTQ focus.

Stories of Our Movement examines this groundbreaking paper’s trajectory, impact and continued relevance. It demonstrates that the BAR has not only reflected the dramatic diversity of the LGBTQ community and the evolution of community priorities. Through its Bay Area focus, news and cultural reporting, sex-positive outlook, editorials and endorsements, the paper has also helped to shape, interpret and define the interests of its increasingly heterogeneous readership. For fifty years, the paper’s personal ads, business and events listings have enabled its readers to build communities, establish networks and construct chosen families.

The exhibition is curated by Rick Gerharter, a San Francisco-based photojournalist who has documented the queer communities of the city and beyond for nearly 35 years. Gerharter has carefully selected historic headlines, cover images, articles and advertising from the BAR's complete back run, which are paired with archival footage and photos from the GLBT Historical Society's archives. The exhibition is organized thematically, highlighting news, politics, culture and sex-positive reporting, opinions and reviews, neighborhood issues, letters to the editor and personal ads.

"My research in the BAR's back issues really underscores just how much the paper has evolved in 50 years, right along with the community," says Gerharter. "I want viewers to come away from this exhibition appreciating the tremendous advances the LGBTQ community has made in five decades, and with an understanding of how important the vital work of the *Bay Area Reporter* has been and continues to be in building and strengthening that community."

Stories of Our Movement is being accompanied by a series of public programs, beginning with a living history panel on April 2 with former and current members of the BAR's staff. Other events will include a virtual curator-led tour of the exhibition and a creative-writing salon and zine-making workshop that continue the paper's venerable legacy of LGBTQ activism, resistance and history-making through the written word. The GLBT Historical Society will also be co-sponsoring additional programs hosted by BAR Media, Inc.

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ABOUT THE CURATOR

Rick Gerharter is a San Francisco-based photojournalist who has documented the queer communities of San Francisco and beyond for nearly 35 years. He has been regularly published in the *Bay Area Reporter* since 1987. Gerharter's extensive editorial work and travel photography documents performing arts, portraits, architecture and LGBTQ life, and has appeared in a wide variety of periodicals, newspapers, books, films and exhibitions. He is also a contributor to Getty Images. His work is in the collection of the James C. Hormel Center at the San Francisco Public Library and the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco. For more information, visit <https://www.rickgerharterphotos.com>.

ABOUT THE GLBT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The GLBT Historical Society is a public history center and archives that collects, preserves and interprets the history of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and the communities that support them. Founded in 1985, the society maintains one of the world's largest collections of LGBTQ historical materials. For more information, visit www.glbthistory.org.

ABOUT THE BOB ROSS FOUNDATION

Based in San Francisco, the Bob Ross Foundation was established in 1996 by Bob Ross (1934–2003). A pioneer of LGBT community journalism, Ross was the co-founder of the *Bay Area Reporter*. He served as publisher from 1971 until his death in 2003. Tom Horn, publisher emeritus of the *Bay Area Reporter*, is now the trustee of the foundation, which provides grants to a Bay

Area LGBTQ nonprofits and supports charities and causes that reflect the philanthropic priorities established by Ross.

GRAPHICS

The following images may be reproduced only in association with coverage of the exhibition *Stories of Our Movement: The Bay Area Reporter at 50*. Credits noted in captions are mandatory.



The first issue of the *Bay Area Reporter*. Vol. 1, No. 1, April 1, 1971; Periodicals Collection, GLBT Historical Society, copyright BAR Media, Inc.

U.S. House rejects homophobia
Heffley amendment to overturn executive order goes down to defeat.
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Banner days
More on the just-completed Gay Games from Amsterdam.
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Perversely pretty
Photographer Pierre Moliner in Santa Monica.
 see Arts section



BAY AREA REPORTER

Vol. 28 • No. 33 • 13 August 1998

Serving the Gay & Lesbian Community for more than 27 years

No obits

by Timothy Rodrigues

Readers of the Bay Area Reporter who regularly scan the obituary page for familiar faces — friends, neighbors, former rivals, that guy you used to see at the gym who has just been accused for a while — will have to forgo that ritual this week. No obituaries were filed with the paper for this issue, a first since the AIDS epidemic erupted in San Francisco's gay community.

They don't mean that there were no AIDS deaths in the past week; most would assume most have more obits than usual. Nevertheless, after more than 17 years of struggle and death, and some works with as many as 20 obituaries printed in the B.A.R., it seems a new reality may be taking hold, and the community may be on the verge of a new era of the 1950s, perhaps.

"It is particularly refreshing, and I think an omen, a break like that, for the same reason. It is hard to imagine that it will last forever," Dana Vee Gordon, director of gay and lesbian

health for the Department of Public Health (DPH), told the B.A.R. "We all deserve a little bit of respite," he continued.

Derek Gordon, director of communications for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation (SFAF), who has been living with HIV for many years, talked about scanning the obituary page, looking to see who had died, and feeling "it was just a matter of time before I would see my own face."

"Tomorrow my grandfather said he knew he was getting near death because he used to scan the obits," he told the B.A.R. "I used to think how tragic because I was doing the same thing as he."

Gordon continued that the epidemic is not over, but acknowledged that the decrease in the number of obituaries reflects a parallel trend in his personal experience. He said he no longer feels the same sense of "dread and despair," and added, "I don't have any [recent] obits in personally yet."

Dick Patrick, AIDS policy advisor to Mayor Willie Brown, and someone who has lived with AIDS for many years, has had the opposite personal experience. He has recently had

had to deal with for some time.

"I have finally had a conviction that we are seeing a shift in the opposite direction," he said, mentioning an increase in the number of people he knows who have died, gotten infected by HIV, or been diagnosed.

While acknowledging that the lack of obituaries is a symbolically very important, Patrick stressed that it is important not to overstate the situation and said there should be no loosening of efforts to fight the epidemic.

If current estimates are correct, 19 people may have been infected by HIV in the last week, and it is estimated that 21,000 people living in San Francisco are HIV-positive.

Although scientists, reporters, and government officials have commented that AIDS deaths have been declining since the introduction of new anti-HIV drug regimens, several of those interviewed mentioned that many people appear obitously, choose not to take, or do not benefit from currently available treatment options. Also, the incidence of HIV/AIDS is increasing among youth, people of color, women, and the lesbian

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First-time ladies, having a ball

Before they "graduate" from first-time ladies status in the 22nd annual "There'll Be a Time," dozens of them became brides over nearly 8 hours of 23 months gone in the court, and had some better news than in any other wedding class. The women of the inaugural Judicial Day Affair 2000, presided by the mayor and San Francisco District and 2nd District Judges Timothy Williams. For more on the ball, see Steve Hovav's column on page 44.



FIRST OF TWO SECTIONS

Anti-CUAV case goes to court

by Dennis Conkin

Apple San Francisco sued over that Commission Against Violence (CUAV) has made an awful mistake — and that he's not the better but the new victim in a targeted local gay divorce

in a witness case. Linda Newer says that a CUAV domestic violence advocate, who provided victims of violence services to his former partner, had to a Family Court Commissioner when she accused Newer of assaulting her client after a stay-away order had been issued in the case. His small claims lawsuit in San Francisco Superior Court over CUAV's alleged "abuse and libel" in connection with the case began Tuesday, August 11.

A family court commissioner granted a permanent restraining order against Newer last April, and a later attempt by Newer to have it thrown out was dismissed without prejudice on procedural grounds. Newer will appeal that dismissal.

Superior Court Judge Donna Hitchens, who presides the Unified Family Court, also told Newer that her review of the case indicated that the family court commissioner had ruled legally and appropriately in the case, based on the facts as presented.

"In my opinion, Commissioner [Hitchens] should have been more diligent in allowing you to state your position," said Hitchens, an openly lesbian longtime judge.

Newer's former partner Robert Bennett declined to talk with the Bay Area Reporter about the case.

However, in a Family Court affidavit, Bennett said he was assaulted so badly by Newer without prosecution March 18, 1997

that he suffered a broken hand, his mouth, and other injuries.

Newer told the B.A.R. that he was the one who was seriously injured by glass shards from a sliding door during the incident — in which he said Bennett "tried to murder me."

"I was taken by ambulance to San Francisco General Hospital. I thought that night he was going to kill me," Newer said.

Newer said the incident was precipitated by Bennett's alleged methamphetamine drug use during a relationship several years ago, and that Bennett struck him after she refused to participate in a sexual en-

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