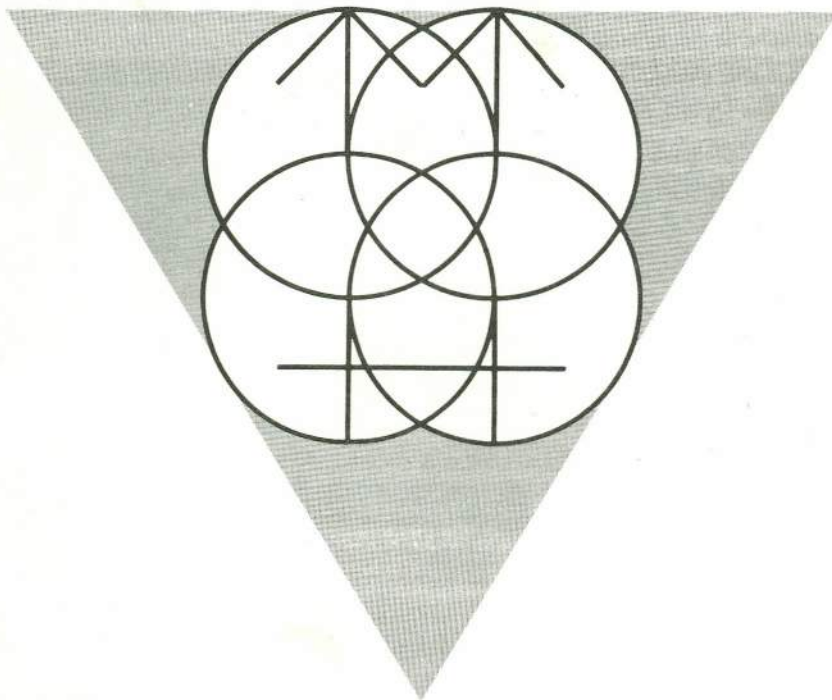


houston town meeting 1

Beyond oppression



toward community

participants' workBook

June 25, 1978

W O R K B O O K

F O R

T O W N M E E T I N G 1

HOUSTON, TEXAS

June 25, 1978

ASTRO-ARENA

FROM THE ISSUES AND DISSEMINATION COMMITTEE

The contents of this workbook are the result of input from hundreds of persons who invested thousands of hours of their time in the project. We want to use this space for thanking those people. Two months ago, when Town Meeting moved from idea to action, the task of drafting a set of Rules of Order and a set of proposed resolutions that could approximate the needs and desires of our community seemed impossible. But here they are. If we can do this, we can do anything.

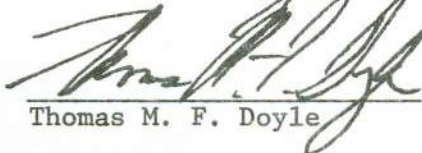
The Rules are quite different from those traditionally used as the basis for assemblies like Town Meeting. Traditional rules of order (particularly Robert's Rules) work well in continuing assemblies of schooled legislators. Using these rules in an open meeting like ours, with a very few hours available for business, could have been unweildy. It could have resulted in control by a few persons sophisticated in political process, who might gain access to microphones to promote a few issues of personal interest. The new rules should give everyone an equal chance to express opinion. Let us observe the process carefully this year, and refine the rules to make them even better for the future.

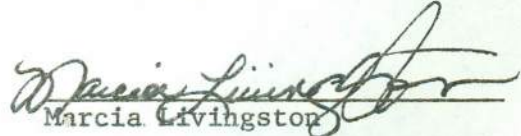
The resolutions themselves are a distilled version of information we received from you, both through the mail and in the workshops we have held all over town these past two months. We do not present these for you to "rubber stamp." These resolutions provide a framework for you to work with. Change them by amendment; offer new resolutions; offer substitute resolutions; reject those you do not like.


You have the job of turning this framework into a finished structure. When Town Meeting is over, you will have created a complete list of priorities and a plan of action for our community to follow in the coming year. For the first time in our history, we can move forward aggressively to secure our right to exist.

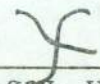
Town Meeting is the most exciting event yet to happen in our community. It is exciting because you are involved. You must remain involved, and work hard to turn the rhetoric of Town Meeting into political and social reality during the coming year. Together, we can make Houston take a lead in securing gay rights and freedoms nationwide. Thank you for helping. We need you more than you need us.

CO-CHAIRS OF THE ISSUES AND DISSEMINATION COMMITTEE


Thomas M. F. Doyle


Marcia Livingston


Robert R. Lockett


Another gay, whose lifetime career would be imperiled by openly signing this decree

WHAT TO DO WITH THIS NOTEBOOK

1. Do read the rules of order carefully, so you will understand how Town Meeting I will work.
2. Do make plans to attend a participation workshop, so you can get all your questions about rules answered before Town Meeting I.
3. Do read through the resolutions and decide how you feel about each one.
4. Do prepare an amendment if you basically like a resolution but feel something needs to be added or deleted from it.
5. Do prepare a substitute resolution if you think the issue of a resolution is important, but the resolution approaches the issue in the wrong manner.
6. Do prepare a new resolution if you think an issue is missing that should be introduced.
7. Do plan to debate against resolutions you oppose.
8. Do start thinking about how you would like the balance of funds (if any) from Town Meeting I spent to further Gay goals. Prepare a resolution on this.
9. Do carry this workbook with you, and discuss its contents with your friends.

WHAT NOT TO DO WITH THIS NOTEBOOK

1. Do not put it in a drawer and not read it until Town Meeting day.
2. Do not wait until Town Meeting day to register your amendments, resolutions, or desire to debate. Time for action is limited; first come, first served.
3. Do not lose it. We may not have a surplus, or the money to replace lost books.

P R O P O S E D

R U L E S

CHICANO GAYS -- CHICANO IDENTITY

Gay Chicanos are a minority within a minority.

Gay Chicanos are put in a unique situation which confronts them with an identity crisis.

This situation exists and has been created by stereotypical, racist and sexist attitudes that exist in our society.

We of Town Meeting 1 do not want to repeat the mistakes of the racist society in which we live.

These attitudes in this society can only be combated by Gay Chicano pride, self respect and unity through the establishment of a Gay Chicano Organization.

CHICANO GAYS --- ECONOMIC SITUATION

The Gay Chicano is faced with a double or triple oppression of racism and sexism which contribute to economic disadvantages.

Poverty and inferior education have often prevented Gay Chicano men and women from participating in their true sexuality.

Due to these economic disadvantages, we of Town Meeting 1 call upon all Gay organizations sponsoring conferences or other activities to extend special consideration to Gay Chicanos to promote and insure full participation.

CHICANO GAYS -- GAY CHICANO INTERACTION WITH THE CHICANO COMMUNITY

There exists within the straight Chicano Community sexist attitudes and institutions which have oppressed the community as a whole, in particular gay men and women straight and gay.

The Church has posed a guilt on our sexuality and has discouraged our spiritual development.

Machismo, the false image of male superiority, has contributed to suppression of our natural sexual expression.

The traditional family concept based on property, ownership and reproduction has furthered the oppression of the Gay Chicano.

These sexist concepts have alienated the Gay Chicano from family and community.

CHICANO GAYS -- INTERACTION CONT'

Chicano Gays are still Chicanos and the problems that effect the Chicano community effect Chicano Gays.

It is the right and responsibility of Chicano Gays to participate in any community activities they see fit.

Therefore, we of Town Meeting 1 resolve to use our numbers and political influence to further the progress of the Chicano community as a whole.

We further condemn the biased decision brought down by Judge Ross Sterling in the Joe Campos Torres murder trial. Justice has not been served yet!

RULES CHANGES

ON PAGE 3

-Strike the next to the last paragraph.

ON PAGE 5

-Strike 1., 2. and 3., and insert in their place the following:

"Debate on each resolution shall be limited to 15 minutes."

ON PAGE 6

-Strike the entire page, except for the first two lines, and insert in its place the following:

"Amendments shall be debated in the order that they are received by the Issues Coordinator. Two minutes shall be allowed for the introduction of an amendment which may be a positive statement by the offeror of such amendment, which time may not be yielded or assigned to another participant. Thereafter, debate shall be limited to two minutes per participant with the total time for debate on each amendment limited to six minutes. Each amendment shall be voted upon at the expiration of such six-minute period for debate.

"After debate on substitute resolutions, a vote shall be taken on each substitute resolution in the order that it has been received by the Issues Coordinator. Each voting participant is directed to carefully consider each substitute and vote for only one. The substitute resolution receiving a majority vote shall prevail and shall be substituted for the original resolution. A second vote shall be taken on whether to adopt or reject the resolution as substituted."

ON PAGE 7

-Strike E.

-Strike second and third paragraphs in H.

ON PAGE 8

-Strike J.

-Strike L., and insert in its place the following:

"Resolutions, amendments to resolutions and substitute resolutions shall be adopted by a majority vote of those voting."

-Strike M.

HOUSTON TOWN MEETING I
PROPOSED SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER

I.

DEFINITIONS

"COALITION" refers to the Houston Town Meeting Coalition, an unaligned group formed by and composed of Lesbians and Gay men from the Houston area.

"EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE" refers to the Executive Committee of the Houston Town Meeting Coalition. This committee is charged with the managerial functions of the Town Meeting project and consists of three Co-Chairs of the committee as well as two representatives from each of the various committees of the Coalition.

"ISSUES & DISSEMINATION COMMITTEE" (hereinafter referred to as "I & D Committee") is the Issues & Dissemination Committee of the Coalition. This committee is composed of four Co-Chairs chosen by and from the membership of the committee. Membership on the committee is open to all members of the Greater Houston community. This committee is charged with the task of coordinating the effort of working with the community to draft: (1) the resolutions to be presented at the Town Meeting, and (2) the Special Rules of Order for the Town Meeting.

"SESSION" refers to the actual Town Meeting Session to be held on June 25, 1978.

"ISSUES COORDINATORS" are persons chosen by the I & D Committee to coordinate all activity on the floor during the session relating to specific issues defined by the I & D Committee.

"ISSUES COORDINATING TABLES" (hereafter sometimes referred to as "Tables") are tables from which the Coordinators operate on the floor of the session. There shall be one per coordinator and thus one for each issue category.

II.

CALL TO CONFERENCE

The Executive Committee shall determine the time, place and agenda of the session and shall issue official notice to a representative of each Coalition committee, to all registered participants in Town Meeting, and to the general public.

III.

TOWN MEETING PARTICIPANTS

The Town Meeting shall be open to all who support the Gay Rights Movement. Participants shall be designated as voting and non-voting. Only those participants who reside in the Houston Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) as defined by the Federal Bureau of the Budget (Montgomery, Waller, Fort Bend, Brazoria, Galveston, Liberty and Harris Counties) shall be eligible as voting participants.

Participants in Town Meeting will be issued identification badges declaring their status as participants and they will be required to wear these at all times during the session to allow free access to the floor and seating areas.

IV.

DESIGNATED SEATING

Separate seating areas shall be provided and clearly designated as follows:

- A. Staff
- B. Special Guests
- C. Duly registered press
- D. Voting Participants--Media Visible
- E. Voting Participants--Media Protected
- F. Non-voting Participants--Media Visible
- G. Non-voting Participants--Media Protected

V.

METHODS OF VOTING

There shall be no absentee voting. No individual shall have more than one vote.

The regular method of voting shall be by the raising of voters' badges. There shall be no secret ballots or roll call votes.

Floor tellers shall be appointed by the I & D Committee. These floor tellers shall count and report votes when a consensus is not immediately apparent to the chair or the participants. The floor tellers shall be assigned to specific sections of the voting areas. During a vote count only floor tellers will be permitted to move about. All other persons except voting delegates shall leave the voting area.

VI.

CONFERENCE OFFICIALS

There shall be in attendance at all times during the session two Co-Chairs of the Session, a Co-Chair of the Executive Committee, a Co-Chair of the I & D Committee, an official parliamentarian, timekeepers, tellers, a recording secretary and credentials monitors.

VII.

MINUTES

The Recording Secretary, appointed by the Recording Committee of the Coalition, shall be responsible for the preparation of the official minutes of the session. Tape recording shall be provided to aid in the preparation of accurate minutes by the designated Recorder or Recorders. Minutes shall be approved by the Co-Chairs of the Session and by the Co-Chairs of the Executive Committee.

VIII.

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The Executive Committee shall appoint the parliamentarians who shall be advisors to the Co-Chairs of the Session.

Any question regarding the interpretation of these rules shall be resolved by the I & D Committee.

Matters not specifically covered by these Special Rules of Order shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

The agenda or order of business and seating arrangements shall be determined in call cases by the Executive Committee.

IX.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Prior to the session, the Executive Committee shall appoint a temporary chair to open the session. The Committee shall nominate two individuals to serve as Co-Chairs of the Session. The voting participants shall decide by two-thirds vote of those present whether or not to accept these nominees as Co-Chairs. If either nominee fails to be approved by the voting participants, nominations will then be in order from the floor to fill the position(s) by a two-thirds vote.

The next order of business shall be to approve the Special Rules of Order by a two-thirds vote of those present. If the Special Rules of Order shall fail to be approved, the rules governing the meeting shall be as in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, Chapter XVII on Mass Meetings, with the exception that no business can be considered until Special Rules of Order are adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting participants present.

Upon approval of the Special Rules of Order, it is then in order to proceed with introduction of special guests, the keynote speech, and other business to be disposed of prior to consideration of the resolutions.

X.

THE MEETING

A. Agenda.

The Meeting shall be divided into contiguous portions of time devoted to each of the issues categories. These issues categories shall be considered in alphabetical order by the official designation given them by the I & D Committee. This rule shall supercede all other decisions regarding the agenda.

New business items shall be considered during the half hour prior to the scheduled time for adjournment of the meeting. A Table shall be established at which

participants may register to introduce or speak on matters of new business. This Table shall be open to voting participants until the time when the immediately preceding Issues Category is introduced.

B. Obtaining the Floor.

Business at a Table shall be open to voting participants until the time when the immediately preceding Issues Category is introduced. At that time business at the Table shall be closed and participants shall be directed to clear the area around the Table.

C. Debate

Voting Participants wishing to speak on a resolution, or offer an amendment, substitute, or new resolution must register at the appropriate Table prior to the time when business at that Table closes. Registering for this purpose may also be done with an Issues Coordinator in the days between the Call to Conference defined in Section II above and the opening of the Session. Participants will be assigned speaking order based on the time they registered with the coordinator. The only exceptions to this are that the Coordinator has the mandate from the Executive Committee to assure that men and women are given equal access to the microphones and that an attempt be made to offer equal access for varying viewpoints. The Coordinator may break the order of speaking only to achieve these ends. Participants wishing to report abuse of this power may raise a Point of Order (see Motions below).

The following limits shall be placed on discussion for each resolution:

1. Five minutes shall be allowed for introduction of each resolution (including positive statements). This time can be used by one person or divided at the discretion of the sponsor of the resolution.
2. Debate shall be limited to two minutes per participant with the total time to be limited to ten minutes.
3. A three minute statement by the sponsor of the resolution or the sponsor's designee will be allowed but not required at the end of the debate.

D. Substitute Resolutions and Amendments.

After the discussion period on the Resolution, amendments and substitute motions will be introduced. An amendment is a limited change of the resolution. A substitute motion is a total change of the resolution. A participant may offer only one amendment or substitute motion for each resolution.

Time limits for substitute motions will be the same as those for a resolution.

Substitute motions and amendments will be considered in the following manner:

1. Substitute motions shall be debated first in the order they are received by the issues coordinator. A vote shall not be taken at this time, however.
2. After all substitute motions have been debated, amendments of the original resolution shall be considered in the order they are received by the issues coordinator. After debate on each amendment has ended a vote shall be taken on it. This process shall continue until all amendments are disposed of (or the time limit elapses). If a duplicate amendment or one that has similar content and/or intent of a previously considered amendment is made, it may be discarded by the issues coordinator after consultation with the sponsor of the amendment when possible.
3. After all amendments are disposed of votes shall be taken on the substitute motions in the order they were received by the issues coordinator and then on the original resolution as amended. Each voting participant is directed to consider all options available among the original and substitute resolutions and VOTE FOR ONLY ONE. The Chair with the aid of the Tellers will then determine which two among the original and substitute resolutions received the greatest support. There shall then be a vote to determine which of these two is to become the main motion. A vote will then be taken on whether to accept or reject this main motion.
4. If at any time during these deliberations, the time allotted for that particular resolution expires, debate shall cease (unless extended by the time-keeper as outlined below).

The following time limits shall be placed on discussion for each amendment:

1. Two minutes shall be allowed for the introduction (including positive statements) of the amendment.
2. Debate shall be confined to two minutes per participant with the total time limited to six minutes.
3. Three minutes shall be available after debate to the sponsor or the sponsor's designee.

During debate on amendments and substitute motions discussion shall be confined to the motion on the floor.

E. Extending Time Limits

Debate on a resolution, amendment, or substitute may be extended by the timekeeper upon request of an Issues Coordinator. The decision of the Timekeeper in these matters is final.

F. Addressing the Body

Participants registered with an issues coordinator to speak should be near the appropriate microphone when the resolution comes up for action. Participants must identify themselves in some manner prior to speaking. A legal name need not be given. For instance, participants may use their first names or pseudonyms.

G. New Business

Debate on new business shall not exceed two minutes per speaker to a maximum of ten minutes per item.

H. Motions

The following motions will not be entertained by the chair: to Lay on the Table; to move the previous question (close debate); to refer to committee; to postpone; to amend the amendment; or to reconsider.

A participant wishing to make a Point of Order or Question of Privilege should go to the Point of Order table directly beside the principal podium. A parliamentarian will be on hand to answer questions on the Rules of procedure. If the person has a legitimate point it will be relayed to the chair who shall rule on the point.

Point of Order. A participant always may require adherence to the rules. But a point of order is not an opportunity to speak on the substance of the question or ask rhetorical questions. A participant who honestly believes that a speaker or the ruling of the Chair is out of order should go immediately to the Point of Order table and state specifically which rule is being violated.

Question of Privilege. A point relating to some obstacle to the proper conduct of the meeting or to some matter of immediate and universal interest to the participants is a matter of precedence. For example the air conditioning or a microphone may be off and a participant wants this problem rectified. Or a participant may wish to introduce a well-known visitor who is momentarily in the hall. A question of privilege should not relate to the question before the assembly.

I. Information

Participants seeking information about a resolution about a resolution should go to the appropriate issues table.

J. Suspension of the Rules

The Chair may amend or suspend the Rules of Order at any time with the support of two-thirds of the voting participants present.

K. Disruptions

Participants who continually try to disrupt the proceedings may be caused to leave the hall by a two-thirds vote of the voting participants present

L. Voting

Voting on Resolutions, amendments, & substitutes shall be by majority of those participants voting & present unless otherwise specified in the rules.

M. Time Limit

The total time for consideration of each resolution (including amendments, substitutes, etc.) shall be limited to 45 minutes.

XI.

COMMITTEE OF THE CONFERENCE

The Executive Committee shall establish a Committee of the Conference which will take steps to provide for the convening of a Second Annual Houston Town Meeting.

P R O P O S E D

R E S O L U T I O N S

TOPICS FOR RESOLUTIONS

- I. Disabled Gays
- II. Employment
- III. Health
- IV. Internal Affairs
 - A. Internal Prejudice
 - B. Muggings
 - C. Lesbian/Gay Internal Affairs
- V. Law Enforcement
- VI. Legal Reform
 - A. Civil Rights
 - B. Single Member Districts (Houston City Council)
 - C. Criminal Reform Bill of 1977
- VII. Mental Health
 - A. Mental Health Care
 - B. Licensing Re-evaluation
- VIII. Military Affairs
 - A. Equal Status and Review of Discharges
 - B. Veterans Administration
- IX. Parenting and Family
- X. Public Awareness
 - A. Education
 - B. Public Schools
 - C. Media
- XI. Youth
- XII. Religion
 - A. Ecumenical Homophile Interfaith Alliance
 - B. Consensual Sex Acts
 - C. Tax-exempt Funds Use
- XIII. Other--National Gay Rights Assembly

DISABLED/HANDICAPPED GAY ORGANIZATION OF TEXAS

There is currently no organization to handle special problems of gay disabled and handicapped people in Houston and Harris County.

Establishment of the Handicapped Gay Organization of Texas should help promote political participation, self-awareness and communication among gay handicapped and disabled people. This organization can work with other established handicapped-peoples organizations, both heterosexual and homosexual.

Therefore, Houston Town Meeting I resolves to assist in the establishment of a Handicapped Gay Organization of Texas (HGOT).

EMPLOYMENT

Employment should be based only on qualifications such as knowledge, skills, education and training.

As employment is basic to the support and survival of one's self and one's family, it is essential that sexual or affectional preference not be used to deny employment or advancement, or as an excuse to terminate an employee.

Homosexuality should not be a basis for denial of alternative income maintenance systems such as worker's compensation, unemployment compensation, Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC), or other welfare programs.

Dress codes and grooming standards are discriminatory in employment practice when they are sex-specific or gender-specific or regulate grooming (other than neatness or cleanliness). Consistency in dress is reasonable when all employees are required to wear specific colors, emblems or uniforms.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore calls on federal, state and local governments to enact or to amend existing legislation to prevent discrimination against homosexuals, transpersons and transgenderists in employment and alternative income systems.

All gay ploitical organizations should actively work or continue working to amend the employment policies of all Houston area business^s in accordance with the above needs and to organize boycotts of those businesses which discriminate.

HEALTH

Gay people historically have been subjected to abuses by the medical community -- from castration to aversion therapy, from shock treatment to incarceration, from lobotomies to harmful chemical treatment. The more outrageous of these experiments or hostile treatments have been stopped by law. However, the assault on Gay patients' dignity and privacy continues.

Gay women seeking gynecological treatment often must explain their sexual preference before doctors can adequately treat them. Gay men often meet

contempt while seeking treatment for hepatitis, venereal diseases or other sex-related ailments.

Moreover, because gay people are not allowed to marry, we are often deprived basic information about our lovers' medical conditions, even under the most tragic circumstances.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore encourages the American medical community to approach treatment of gay people progressively, fairly and earnestly, according to the Hippocratic Oath.

To this end, we suggest:

1. That reference to a patient's homosexuality either not be included in medical files, or if it must be, that it be kept completely confidential, as long as the prevailing winds of bigotry blow harshly about our land;
2. That we be given the right to know important information about the medical conditions of our lovers;
3. That we be given the right to include our lovers on insurance and financial coverage pertaining to all kinds of medical costs;
4. That a list of Gay, Gay-informed or sympathetic doctors be made available for our use;
5. That medical journal reporting and statistics pertaining to Gay people, their physical and mental conditions be free from homophobic bias.
6. That the American medical community institute proper pertinent studies, with input from Gay people so that American doctors will be better informed about the Gay experience and lifestyle.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS -- INTERNAL PREJUDICE

Internal oppression exists within the Gay community in the forms of sexism, racism and ageism, especially regarding Women, Blacks, Chicanos and other minorities. Further, overt and covert discrimination is practiced among Gay businesses through employment practices, admission requirements and treatment of clientele.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore resolves to eliminate all aspects of sexism, racism and ageism. Implementation will include:

1. Specific remedial strategy to benefit Lesbians, Blacks, Chicanos and other minorities who are oppressed economically, socially and politically.
2. Consciousness-raising and problem-solving workshops to reduce internal oppression.
3. Full support by all segments of the Gay community for the ERA and its principles.
4. Political analysis and problem-solving to minimize patriarchal structures and exploitive relationships based on power.

5. Insistence that Gay businesses abide by federal guidelines established in the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, thereby providing equal hiring and advancement for Women, Blacks, Chicanos and other minorities.
6. Insistence that Gay businesses discontinue discriminatory admission practices, including, but not limited to, dress codes and I.D. requirements.
7. Boycotting Gay businesses which continue to discriminate.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS -- MUGGINGS

Members of the Gay community are frequent victims of harrassment and physical violence, especially when in the vicinity of establishments known to cater to Gays.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore calls upon the owners of Gay establishments to provide protection for their customers while on and in the immediate vicinity of their premises. Moreover, Gay establishment owners or managers should inform patrons of potential dangers as they occur.

In addition, we suggest that local Gay organizations provide training in self-defense. When necessary, we strongly encourage Gay people to organize private security patrols in order to protect themselves from harrassment and attack.

LESBIAN/GAY INTERNAL AFFAIRS

A majority of gay Women and Men have not previously committed themselves to the conscious, purposeful structure of a gay community and its organization. Divisiveness has previously existed among gay Women and Men in the form of sexism, personality conflicts, power struggles and a lack of consciousness and communication.

Women and Men of the Houston Gay Community have recently come together to express a need for resolution of internal problems as well as for a consolidation of power through gay unity.

Therefore, a Gay Community now considers itself created, based on a commitment to equality, and adopting as its unifying principle (rather than priority) the elimination of oppression based on sexual preference.

Conflicts within the community should be resolved, in part, through the following:

1. Sharing of resources as well as information.
2. Assurance of equal influence of minorities in decision-making processes at all levels, and
3. Outreach to the closeted members of the community, offering reciprocal support for our mutual sense of identity, purpose and strength.

As a means of promoting community identity, we actively encourage and support all forms of art and literature which present honest images of Lesbians and Gay Men. To this end, we will commit ourselves to the following:

1. Opposing promotion of art works which present unfair images of gay people.
2. Supporting groups which coordinate art events favorably presenting gay concerns.

We will also combine our intellect and energy to establish a Community Center to concentrate our communication, resources and strength to meet the varied needs of the Gay Community.

Further, implementation shall include:

1. Organization and operation by a representative coalition of gay community members so that no special-interest bloc exercises exclusive control;
2. Selection of management on the basis of skills, expertise, knowledge of managerial techniques and willingness to work;
3. Offering facilities, without prejudice, for the use of gay community organizations, groups and individuals, within the limits of the Community Center's capabilities;
4. Offering referrals to professionals who accept and are sympathetic to gay people and their problems.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Certain officers of the Houston Police Department have conducted themselves in a manner that has endangered public welfare, denied citizens their constitutional rights to equal protection under law and brought discredit upon the Department. Without external pressures, the internal investigations of the Houston Police Department generally failed to eradicate these problems.

Further, there is considerable doubt in the minds of Houstonians about the official police versions of events in the deaths of Sanford Radinsky, Milton Glover, Tommy Hanning, Randall Webster, Joe Campos Torres and many others. There is, within the Houston Police Department, disrespect for the rights of Houston citizens in general.

The Department failed to satisfactorily settle questions surrounding the Gary Wayne Stock death, thereby appearing to cover up the facts. There are significant inconsistencies in the evidence presented in the police report and the statements of witnesses to Stock's death.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore resolves that the 15th Senatorial District Convention of the Texas Democratic Party should strongly call upon that appropriate agency of government - local, state or national - to create a Civilian Police Review Board in the City of Houston, Texas.

We further resolve that this Review Board actively investigate the day-to-day operation of the Houston Police Department in order to restore public confidence in the structure, personnel, management and operating policies of the Department.

We further resolve that this resolution be presented to the Mayor of the City of Houston, the Honorable James McConn, and that such presentation be made by the Chair of this Convention at a date not later than 30 days following the final adjournment of this convention.

LEGAL REFORM

Members of the Gay Community are denied equality under the law, both in civil and criminal matters. This denial is an abridgement of civil rights in a democratic and equal society, unconstitutional in nature and implicitly immoral.

There is no proof that gay people choose a lifestyle or that we follow dictates of biochemistry, genetics or childhood influence. Religious and secular groups attempt to prevent our affectional self-expression and therefore deny us civil rights (because we should, or can, simply cease homosexual acts as our primary means of expressing love and devotion). The contention of such groups is irrelevant to our struggle for rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution.

Majority rule under the Constitution does not justify denying civil rights to any minority. The immorality of this procedure was clearly demonstrated when American female citizens had to wait for a century and a half to be allowed to vote in national elections. Black citizens still would not be allowed to vote in some areas, if non-black citizens were to decide their legal franchise by popular referendum.

Majority rule has been used to deny human rights to American Indians, Chicanos and other non-white, non-Protestant, non-male minority groups among others. Now, majority rule is being used against gay people, transvestites, transsexuals and transgenderists.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore calls for the elimination of Section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code which makes unlawful those acts of mutual consent between adults of the same sex in private; this makes the gay community the only community denied the right to privacy.

Further, we call upon the City Council of the City of Houston to rescind the Public Intoxication Section of the City Code which allows a police officer to arrest, charge and jail anyone (on the basis of one officer's subjective judgment whether an individual represents a public threat). This ordinance led to arbitrary harrassment of the local gay community. Until the Public Intoxication Section is repealed, we call upon the City Council to incorporate into the Code objective arrest procedures, specifically including tests to measure the level of intoxication. Moreover, we urge that enforcement be applied equally to all persons.

We also call upon the Houston City Council to rescind all ordinances traditionally classified under "public lewdness," which outlaw expressions of non-sexual affection between members of the same sex.

We call upon our lawmakers to enact protective legislation concerning mutually-owned property, insurance coverage, inheritance rights, taxation privileges and other legal rights already allowed to conventionally married persons.

We call on state and local governments to remove existent legislation and to defeat proposed legislation regulating dress and grooming, except when such laws are necessary for demonstrated health hazards. We do support specific dress and grooming requirements when all employees are required to wear company colors, emblems or designs.

We urge all Gay citizens to apply appropriate pressure to legislative bodies, join representative lobby organizations and financially support full-time gay rights lobbies.

SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS (Houston City Council)

The democratic process is invalid unless views of minorities and special interest groups are represented.

The nature of our society is such that these groups are often clustered in neighborhoods and ghettos.

The Houston City Council presently consists of Council members elected at-large. This effectively means that representation of minority and special-interest opinions in city government is consistently dispersed, and therefore ignored.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore calls upon the Texas Legislature to amend the charter of the City of Houston to establish single-member districts, in order to properly represent all special-interest and minority views.

LEGAL REFORM -- CRIMINAL REFORM BILL OF 1977

In order to pursue the personal and group political goals of the Gay Rights Movement, we must live in an atmosphere of political freedom.

The Criminal Reform Bill of 1977 (S.1437 and H.R. 6869), in an effort to protect the governmental bureaucracy from any and all inconvenience, denies United States Constitutional freedoms and ignores the prerogative of a healthy, unified, and dynamic citizenry to work towards constructive governmental change.

A thorough revision of the criminal code is indeed in order, but S.1437 and H.R. 6869 do not provide equal unbiased protection of the law. In fact, they are so extensively repressive that they are not amendable.

Houston Town Meeting I calls on all groups and persons who are interested in preserving personal freedoms and human rights to make defeating this bill, and encouraging a new review of the criminal code, a top priority item for political action in 1978.

MENTAL HEALTH

It is essential for us as homosexuals to have the right to control our own lives, free from society's opinion on what constitutes good mental health. Mentally and emotionally healthy individuals maintain their self-worth and respect for others independent of societal value systems.

Homophobia (the irrational fear of homosexuals and homosexuality) has many origins and takes many forms. Homophobia negatively affects both the homosexual and heterosexual since oppression in any form breeds mental illness in both the oppressor and the oppressed.

The quality of mental health care available to the homosexual community will remain inferior so long as health and welfare agencies in both the public and private sectors maintain homophobic biases, and so long as individual practitioners allow personal bias and ignorance to influence professional judgement.

Therefore, as Town Meeting I participants, we assert our right and responsibility to express our sexual and affectional preference and resulting life-style, free from superimposed societal stereotyping, which has resulted in our self-deprecation.

Further, Houston Town Meeting I calls for:

1. Development of support systems for homosexuals, such as local groups of national organizations, be they political, personal, professional or spiritual in origin and purpose.
2. Development of consciousness-raising groups for homosexuals.
3. Services for homosexuals to include individual, couple, group and family counseling.
4. Development of referral services for homosexuals which will screen mental health professionals for judgemental or biased attitudes.
5. Outreach to mental health professionals, health and welfare agencies and othersto educate practitioners regarding the nature and reality of homosexual experience and lifestyles, and the effect of homophobia on everyone's mental health.

MENTAL HEALTH -- LICENSING RE-EVALUATION

The province of each healthy, free individual's mind and personality is sacred and inviolate. Techniques of therapists and mental-health professionals intended to promote a healthy mind, personality, and relationship to life deserve the closest scrutiny. Abuse of these techniques constitutes tampering with the individual mind, which is the basis of meditative thought and the self-determination most sacred to society.

Justifying a theraputic technique because a person freely agrees to it is naive and without scientific foundation, since effective programming techniques exist which can bend any individual's will without his or her knowledge or consent.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore calls for an examination of licensing procedures for all therapists, associated service personnel, therapeutic communities, drug rehabilitation centers and halfway houses. These licenses should be regularly re-evaluated by qualified mental-health professionals who are free of homophobic bias. The results of this evaluation should be presented to the Texas Legislature. Those practitioners lacking in current techniques honoring self-determination should be immediately placed on notice, suspended, or have their licenses revoked by appropriate courts.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

In the last four years alone, some 1,800 persons have been discharged from the U.S. military services for being homosexual. Others have been denied admission because of their sexual or affectional preference.

Therefore, Houston Town Meeting I calls upon the President of the United States, as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, to guarantee by Executive Order, equal status of unidentified and identified homosexuals, in both admission and assignment to security posts in the Armed Services. We also call for a review to upgrade all prior discharges, or limitation of assignment, based on purely sexual or affectional preference or sexism.

MILITARY AFFAIRS -- VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

The Veterans' Administration's rejection of same-sex relationships is part of its overall blatant discrimination, which deprives gay veterans of benefits due them. Military services organizations have adopted similar discriminatory policies against gays. Consequently, many veterans who have honorably served their country are presently being denied benefits because of unfair or dishonorable discharges based on sexual or affectional preference.

Houston Town Meeting I calls upon The President, as Commander-in-Chief of the Executive Branch of the United States Government, to issue the following binding policy statements or appropriate Executive Orders:

1. To establish gay-awareness studies for Veterans' Administration personnel.
2. To stop indiscriminate reference to any citizen's real or alleged homosexuality in all Veterans' Administration records.
3. To investigate immediately discriminatory practices against gays by existing veterans' organizations.

We also call for all gay veterans to unite now, to work for establishment of a gay veterans' organization, for the purpose of presenting us as responsible and patriotic Americans worthy of all rights and benefits due every honorably-discharged veteran.

PARENTING AND FAMILY

Being a parent is a phenomenon common to both the heterosexual and Gay communities. There is no evidence that children growing up in Gay homes are harmed as a result of the parents' sexual preference.

Fitness for parenting in both Gay and straight situations is often decided by the courts in an arbitrary, sexist and biased manner.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore calls on the Gay community to educate the general public, in order to eliminate stereotypes, as well as to reaffirm basic parental rights.

Implementation will include:

1. Providing support to Lesbian and Gay parents fighting visitation rights and custody battles in the courts, and
2. Identifying family-relations court judges whose decisions demonstrate arbitrary or oppressive patterns and working to re-educate these judges. If no other alternative exists, we intend to work to remove biased judges from the bench, and replace them with more appropriate judges.

PUBLIC AWARENESS - Education

The general public has many misconceptions, as well as a general lack of factual knowledge, about Lesbians and Gay men. Such ignorance is a major reason for the oppression Gay people experience.

Houston Town Meeting I resolves that the following corrective measures be undertaken:

1. Ascertain and evaluate the extent of informative Lesbian and Gay literature in local public libraries, and urge libraries to add needed materials.
2. Compile a list of knowledgeable speakers from the Gay community and urge social, religious, and educational organizations to utilize their services.
3. Make available a list of referrals to be used by counseling organizations and professional and para-professional counselors.
4. Urge all institutions of higher learning to include unbiased courses dealing with human sexuality, including homosexuality, bisexuality, transsexuality, and transgenderism.
5. Assure that implementation and use of educational facilities and programs be made available to Gay minority group members, as guaranteed to minorities under the United States Constitution.
6. Appoint a committee to assist minorities to assist themselves, by

pooling resources and bringing together all segments of the minority community.

7. Demand that the certification process of all service professionals (police officers, lawyers, judges, medical doctors, psychiatrists, et al) include an unbiased study course presenting the homosexual experience as a viable and healthy lifestyle.

PUBLIC AWARENESS -- PUBLIC SCHOOLS

It is agreed by most experts that basic sexual orientation is established at an early age. Young people in elementary and secondary schools are given no unbiased information on sexual or affectional orientation. Furthermore, young people, especially effeminate boys and tom-boyish girls, are harrassed by fellow students, and even teachers. Such students have no access to sympathetic and informed counseling and reference materials; concerned teachers and administrators, whatever their personal orientation, risk loss of employment if they try to provide such counseling and materials.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore calls upon the boards of education and school districts to:

1. Institute courses, appropriate to age level, which teach respect for all manifestations of human inter-relations, to be taught by qualified persons;
2. Make reference materials and sympathetic counseling available to all students without embarrassment;
3. Make every effort to eliminate harrassment of all young people;
4. Support and encourage faculty and administrators to work with students needing special understanding.

To accomplish this, we call upon all members of the Houston community to make our concern known to members of boards of education and district administrators and to vote for candidates who will support these resolutions.

PUBLIC AWARENESS -- Media

Negative attitudes and ignorance of facts regarding Gay people and their lifestyles have led to fallacious and prejudicial coverage by the media. Individual leaders and policy-makers within the media have demonstrated a lack of responsibility in reporting issues germane to and reflective of the status and dignity of Gay citizens. The existence of this problem contradicts the guarantee of our inalienable constitutional rights.

We resolve that the Houston Gay community should effect a program to correct this problem. Measures should include:

1. A call to account of any media organization or personnel engaged in irresponsible presentations adversely affecting Gay people.
2. Protests to all local, state, and federal agencies whose functions involve monitoring of the media.

YOUTH

Non-adults in the United States are generally considered property of parents, guardians, or the state.

Adolescent youths of both sexes, and of varied sexual persuasions, are not protected as equally as adults under the provisions of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

The lack of equal Constitutional protection is due to prejudicial laws and arbitrary judicial and medical decisions. Youths are recognized neither legally, nor by general public acknowledgment and practice, as sexual beings with all attendant problems, conflicts and traumas which will drastically affect them throughout their lives. Such problems, conflicts and traumas are caused partly by a lack of information provided by honest and realistic research into all forms of human sexuality, as well as limited access to what little valid information exists.

This lack of valid research and information concerning human sexuality is the cause of numerous problems, conflicts and misunderstandings.

There is no realistic or universal means for competent scientific, objective and honest research into, and dissemination of, all human sexuality.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore strongly recommends that all individuals and groups of good conscience--especially governmental entities--join with us in:

1. Formulating a means of re-examining all basic human rights of non-adults in this country.
2. Establishing a National Commission on Human Sexuality. This Commission is to be composed of competent, objective and unbiased scientific and sociological professionals and will institute an extensive national program of research and education in the field of human sexuality. This Commission on Human Sexuality must make its initial concern the dissemination of applicable information and knowledge to non-adult American citizens.

We insist, however, that sexual abuse and exploitation of non-adults by adults (heterosexual and homosexual) whether psychological, physical or economic, must be dealt with by appropriate legislation. Non-adults must be protected from abuse by adults, while at the same time their individual human rights are recognized.

RELIGION--Ecumenical Homophile Interfaith Alliance

Gay people -- despite lives of secrecy, guilt, and fear -- have often been prominent leaders, supporters, and benefactors of religious organizations. Still, religious organizations have been quite vocal in opposing equal rights for Gay people and other minorities in U. S. society.

While legal persecution and harassment of Gay people are tolerated and often condoned as acts of religious fervor and righteous indignation, a growing number of theologians and religious personalities consider this opposition a betrayal of the essential truths of Christianity.

Houston Town Meeting I calls upon religious leaders and their followers to publicly acknowledge, support, actively educate and change the hearts of those who misuse religion in the service of bigotry and hatred toward the Gay community.

Houston Town Meeting I calls upon all religious organizations, Gay and straight, to form a Homophile Interfaith Alliance to create a common religious foundation to work towards human rights for all people.

RELIGION--Consensual Sex Acts

The First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of a religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Federal and state laws which prohibit consensual sexual acts between adults are based on interpretations of religious texts, and upon assumptions about the morality of such consensual acts. In addition, attempts in the past by government to legislate morality have historically proven costly, ineffective and legally unbinding, while also diverting police efforts from crimes of violence against people and property.

Moreover, many who violate legal prohibitions about sexual expression are mentally sound, patriotic and responsible citizens--both heterosexual and homosexual.

Houston Town Meeting I therefore calls upon the state and federal courts to strike down all laws which prohibit consensual sexual acts between adults--both heterosexual and homosexual--as, in part, an interference of religious attitudes with inalienable freedoms guaranteed all citizens by the U. S. Constitution.

RELIGION--Tax-exempt Funds Use

The U. S. Declaration of Independence states "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

The history of religion may be seen as the gradual revelation of basic dignity of the individual, and the gradual eradication of prejudice, racism, and sexism.

Religious organizations are granted tax-exempt status partly because they are believed to respect and uphold the dignity, freedom and worth of the individual. Some religious organizations have misused their influence and power in an effort to deny Gay people the same human rights as those held by other people. At the same time, the tax-exempt status of many Gay religious organizations has been questioned because of their open support of all human rights. It is intolerable that the federal government should harass those supporting principles of freedom of expression, as guaranteed under the U. S. Constitution, and reward those groups which consistently deny Gay people their rights.

Houston Town Meeting I deplores the actions of tax-exempt religious organizations opposing human rights for Gay people. We call for an end to the use of tax-exempt funds to pay salaries for those who actively campaign against human rights. We also call upon the federal government to investigate these bigots and their activities to determine if illegal use has been made of any tax resources or funds.

OTHER--National Gay Rights Assembly

Gay American citizens are not adequately represented by national, state or local governments or by major political parties. There is also no effective means of communication between Gay communities within the U. S. No existing structure exists whereby Gay Americans can select representatives to define issues and establish priorities of national concern for Gay Americans.

Therefore, Houston Town Meeting I calls upon the leadership of Gay communities throughout the U. S. to organize events similar to Town Meeting I. As a regular part of business thereof, these meetings should elect delegates to state conventions or assemblies, from which delegates will be elected to attend a national Gay Rights Assembly.

PARTICIPATION WORKSHEET

PARTICIPANT:

NAME _____ STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

(If submitted on Town Meeting Day, only name or pseudonym required)

ISSUES CATEGORY (Circle one)

- 1. Disabled Gays
- 2. Employment
- 3. Health
- 4. Internal Community
- 5. Law Enforcement
- 6. Legal Reform
- 7. Mental Health
- 8. Military/Veterans
- 9. Parenting/Family
- 10. Public Awareness
- 11. Religion
- 12. Youth
- 13. Other

ACTION DESIRED (Circle one)

- 1. Amend Resolution # _____
- 2. Offer Substitute Resolution for Resolution # _____
- 3. Debate Resolution # _____
- 4. Debate Amendment # _____
- 5. Offer New Resolution
- 6. Offer New Business

YOUR PROPOSED RESOLUTION, AMENDMENT, SUBSTITUTION EXACTLY AS IT IS TO BE WORDED OR OUTLINE OF THE ARGUMENT FOR DEBATE

Use additional sheets if necessary. Please register this form with the appropriate issues coordinator on Town Meeting Day at the appropriate issues table. Register prior to Town Meeting through the Town Meeting Office. Preference will be given to those who file early.