

Leather Scene

Wedding Belles

by Cain Berlinger

Mufasa, ONYX founder, tied the knot with his significant other in a private ceremony Aug. 22 attended by friends, and well wishers. We wish them success and happiness. ONYX will be celebrating their anniversary, Blackout begins Oct. 9-11 at the Cellblock including a welcome reception/registration, eagle pit party, a Saturday afternoon brunch, demos, as well as gender specific after-hour play parties.

There will be an awards dinner, cocktail party culminating in the infamous Blackout Benefit dance

The ONYX calendar features some of the hottest men of color in our community photographed by Israel Wright and Bill Doan. The calendar features the gay community's hottest Black male icons including former Mr. Drummer and GBM editor Graylin [redacted] Mufasa, twin

hurks Wayne and Duane [redacted] (Mr. Rodeo Rider '98 and Mr. Gay Rodeo Assoc.), Mr. Baltimore Eagle's Ky [redacted] Mr. Vulcan Rubber '96 Rich [redacted] Mid American Leatherman '98, [redacted] just to name a few in this 14-month calendar. For more information on the calendar (\$12.95) and the Blackout weekend e-mail [redacted] or call 312-[redacted]

Remarks by Nation of Islam spokesperson Khalid Abdul Muhammad, one of the organizers of the Million Youth March scheduled Labor Day weekend in New York City, have prompted several Black Gay Organizations to reconsider marching under their gay club banners. Khalid's urging of South Africans to "kill faggots and Lesbians" "has left an understandably bitter taste in the mouths of gay organizers who believe that their presence under a gay banner would not be welcome. Charges of inaccessible organizers and the lack of major youth leadership or input into the march, as well as city opposition, have made participation in the youth march questionable.

Kevin Macruder, executive director of Gay Men of African Descent, has expressed his con-



cern, as has the Audre Lorde Project. Gay men from all over the country were expected to attend the march, but with so many problems on the homefront many community leaders have opted to consider holding similar gatherings in their own regions.

The Human Rights Campaign stepped up its efforts to be more inclusive of all gays by encouraging POC to participate in its scholarship programs for attending the \$250-a-plate annual meeting in Washington in September, through scholarships and volunteering time to the organization. In 1997 President Clinton was the keynote speaker, this year Al Gore and Maya Angelou were scheduled to speak. Elizabeth Birch, HRC's executive director, announced HRC's intention to include a more diverse representation of the gay community in its outreach work including transgendered people. Ms. Birch points out "that diversity alone isn't the point. The point is to have the best minds, skills and talent brought to bear on this movement." HRC has attempted to show a deep commitment to POC by working with the Congressional Black Caucus and other civil-rights organizations, and supporting issues important to POC such as affirmative action and AIDS-related issues such as needle-exchange programs.

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THY CUP RUNNETH OVER The Transsexual Movement Part Two by Lynnell Stephanie Long

The title of this article is the question itself. Is there a Trans movement? Was there ever one? If you look at the trans movement

like the Lesbian & Gay movement, I would say the Trans community hasn't really moved at all.

But it's hard to compare the Gay movement with the Trans movement. Or are they the same? Well, Stonewall was started by a group of Lesbians, Gays & Trans making a stand. So in retrospect, the movement is the same, right? Wrong! Somewhere along the line hate and animosity settled in. The lesbians wanted their own community, forming Andersonville. The gays have North Halsted, but the Trans community was left without a community. Was that intentional? Maybe, maybe not.

For one to understand why that is not true, one must understand the Trans Community.

There are different types of transsexuals. There are Male-to-Female & Female-to-Male transsexuals. Most transsexuals undergo hormonal replacement and sex reassignment surgery. When Male-to-Female transsexuals make the decision to have the VaginoPlasty or sex-reassignment surgery, they must have psychotherapy. The decision to make all transsexuals take psychotherapy was made because of the high suicide rate of transsexuals in the 1970s.

Did you know in the '70s Public Aid paid for the sex-reassignment surgery? Because of this a lot of girls were running to Cook County Hospital to have the surgery. A lot had the surgery before they were mentally prepared. Many committed suicide because they thought the surgery would make them happy or more of a woman. Because of that, all transsexuals must undergo psychotherapy in order to have the sex-reassignment surgery.

Now back to the present. When you go for psychotherapy a lot of the doctors demand that you prove to them that you are a woman. A lot of shrinks want transsexuals to become meek, submissive and desiring to only blend with society. Many were train-washed to believe that was the only choice. To have the surgery and not stand out in the crowd. If you were to tell those doctors that you are a lesbian or wanted to do anything besides what "they" thought was best for you, chances are they wouldn't approve for you to have the surgery. Because of that a lot of transsexuals that had the surgery



have successfully blended into society. There are more transsexuals than what you see at the Baton or on Jerry Springer. But they have chosen not to come out and many won't. Many live as women, work as women and are successful businesswomen. To out themselves could mean to lose their life. Something they fought hard for.

There are only a few of us who are out. I made the decision to come out because I wanted to be an activist and a famous writer. Do I regret that decision? Yes! My life hasn't been easy since I came out. Soon I will have the surgery and will make the decision then to continue my life as it is now. So who's left to form a trans community or movement? The girls on stage? The girls on the street? Who will fight for trans rights?

Well believe it or not, the majority of those that are fighting for trans rights are white? It's Time, Illinois!, a Transgender Political Action group, is made up of mostly white transgendered activists. Yes there are Black members, but only a couple or one.

ITI has been successful in getting Trans rights in Evanston and are working hard to get them in Chicago.

So the question is, "Is there a trans movement?" Yes there is, but those who are fighting need help desperately. I'm not asking anyone to come out. I would never want to put anyone through the bullshit I've been through since I came out.

But you can support the movement by becoming a member of organizations like ITI. It takes money to fight and organizations like ITI need your help. So while no one in the world may know you are a pre or post-op transsexual, you know.

And it's time we all did our part. It's time, Illinois!

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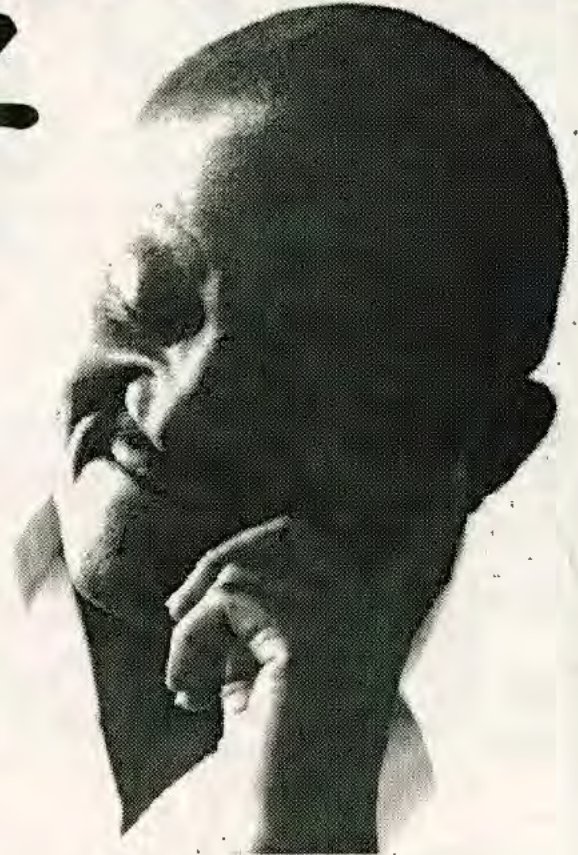
LINES

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JAZZ SINGER

Openly Gay Jazz Singer
Andy Bey Has Wowed
Several Generations of
Jazz Lovers.

*See page 18 for an interview
with this singing sensation*



ALICE WALKER: THE SECRET OF JOY

Her newest book includes
intense love scenes between
two women. Walker is in
Chicago Oct. 6 to read from
and sign copies of her new
book. See page 17.

