

SAN FRANCISCO -- DECEMBER 1978

Alice

A monthly publication of the
Alice B. Toklas Memorial Democratic Club

Rededication Follows 'Day of Infamy'

by Bruce Pettit

"Harvey's gone, but he'll never be forgotten," said Mayor Dianne Feinstein to the 40,000 mourners in a candlelight vigil at City Hall. It was the night of Monday, November 27, 1978--which may be the Day of Infamy of the nation's gay community for years to come.

Three nights later at a memorial service at the Opera House, the staff of the late Supervisor Harvey Milk declared that the period of mourning was over. Harvey would have wanted it that way, it was said, and in that spirit this newsletter refrains from the traditional black box.

San Francisco's executive branch and its legislative branch lost the most liberal public officials feasible for election with the deaths of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Milk. Liberalism in itself does not necessarily produce the best general government, Toklas has in effect said with various past positions. But the club acknowledges that progress for gay rights to date has been aligned with liberal perceptions of civil rights.

Thus the loss to the gay community is monumental. George Moscone forced the 1975 consensual sex bill through the State Senate, earned the Toklas endorsement for mayor that year, and almost certainly would have had it again in 1979.

Harvey Milk never had Toklas backing for public office--largely because the club was born from a quest for conciliatory politics. Yet many Toklas members have recently agreed that the time had come for the Milk

insistence of no-compromise on gay rights. The nation's gay people needed a forceful speaker, unwilling to brook the familiar excuses for delay. To whatever degree Milk's assassination heralds resistance to that forthrightness, the future of gay politics is unsettling. Nevertheless, the gay movement seems prepared to accept the risks because so many of us have grown so weary of waiting.

In a way we never expected at the beginning of this historic November, we can be doubly grateful for the defeat of Proposition 6. From the victory over Briggs we have renewed confidence in the cause for which Harvey Milk lived. A standing ovation greeted Anne Kronenberg's Opera House restatement of Harvey's conviction: "We are--we are--going to win this battle."

The city politic, including its gay aspect, will be realigned. We may not have a sure sense of the changes until the city election one year from now. Even so we will deal with pieces of the mosaic before we are sure what they will reveal.

Here are some ways in which Toklas and other groups will forge ahead for now:

- Wednesday, Dec. 6, 7 p.m., there will be a meeting at the Eureka Valley Recreation Center (Collingwood at 18th) to discuss the possibility of a national gay march on Washington next summer on the tenth anniversary of Stonewall.

- Gay presence in the national Democratic Party will continue. Last month Toklas appropriated \$50 to provide copies of the proposed platform of the Women's Conference to delegates to the national Democratic Party Conference in Memphis this month. The club will lobby that proposed platform for adoption as the national party platform. On Dec. 6 at 2255 Washington Street, a fundraising party to aid the expenses of delegates Frank Fitch and Jane Murphy will suggest a \$10 donation from 5 to 7 p.m.

- Toklas' Political Action Committee will meet Dec. 7, 7:30 p.m., at 188 Eureka. A District 5 supervisor will be considered if none has been appointed. The executive committee's proposal for endorsement procedure will be reviewed.

- New club officers will be nominated next Monday (Dec. 11) at Raffles in the Fox Plaza. Positions up for election Jan. 8 are president, vice president, corresponding secretary, recording secretary, treasurer and public relations director. Candidates for each position will be granted two-minute nomination times to be used

for speeches (one or several) under recommended rules. Francis Wilmarth of the California Democratic Council will review the merits of CDC reaffiliation. A Women's Caucus dinner will precede the meeting at 6:00 (call Connie O'Connor at 567-8609 for reservations) and at 9:00 members and friends will adjourn to the Starlight Room (1121 Market near 7th). Mark Calhoun is giving Alice a Christmas party and a \$250 donation.

- On Sunday, Dec. 17, from 3 to 6 p.m., will be Alice's annual Christmas and Hanukkah party--at the home of vice president Cappi Patterson, 36 Buena Vista Terrace. Earlier in the day the Democratic State Central Committee may sponsor Assembly District elections of members. If so, announcement will be made at the Dec. 11 Toklas meeting.

- Monday, Dec. 18 is the executive committee meeting, 1474 Sacramento #402. Tuesday, Dec. 19 is the club Membership Committee meeting at 151 Albion #1. Wednesday, Dec. 20 is Finance/Budget at 1474 Sacramento. All meetings begin at 7:30.

- Bill May envisions an aggressive Issues Committee for 1979. The Dec. 26 meeting, 7:30, at the home of the chair (2784 - 23rd Street) will begin listing the topics. Some suggestions: (1) public and party appointments of gays; (2) organized religion and the gay movement ["The Briggs Initiative has forced this investigation on us," May says]; (3) what we can learn from the Prop. 6 election about campaign tactics, fundraising, expenditures; (4) how to handle "political spoilers" ["More and more we are seeing good candidates divide our votes, allowing those we do not support to win"].

- California Human Rights Advocates has designated Jan. 15 as "AB 1 Day"--when gays from around the state will go to Sacramento to urge passage of gay employment protection. Write CHRA, Box 14127, San Francisco 94114. Toklas last month resolved to urge other groups to match the club in financially aiding CHRA, which suffered during the Prop. 6 crisis.

To resolve a problem that arose during Alice's First Annual Awards Dinner, members adopted a policy last month insisting that, in addition to honoring politicians, one woman and one man be given equal speaking time and billing for future dinners.

Retiring Toklas president Frank Fitch extended his appreciation for the club's endorsement of and \$90 contribution to his successful candidacy for the new 15-member city Charter Revision Commission. Citywide he collected 27,425 votes--to place 6th among 104 hopefuls.
