

SIR, GAA ON ARRESTS

WHO'S TO BLAME?

An important officer of the established San Francisco homosexual rights organization, the Society for Individual Rights, has stated, in effect, that transsexuals and transvestites have themselves to blame for the increased police harassment and arrests in the Tenderloin area of SF.

Jim Foster, political chairman of SIR, said reasons for the police sweeps resulting in 46 arrests two weekends ago were due to "a serious problem in the Tenderloin area with some prostitutes, including transsexuals beating and robbing their tricks."

His remarks, quoted in the current issue of the Advocate, a national homosexual rights newspaper, were in response to allegations by the Gay Activists Alliance that the police sweeps were for political reasons.

Ray Broshears, president of GAA and long-time antagonist of SIR, has stated publicly that he felt the sweeps came as reprisals against gay people for the support they gave losing candidates in the recent mayoral election.

"Just plain bullshit," was Foster's quoted response in the Advocate to Broshears' contention.

SF restaurant and tavern owner Bill Beardemphl was quoted as disagreeing with the GAA view "because a wide range of mayoral candidates, including winning incumbent Alioto, had been backed by various gay groups and factions."

However, organized support from gay people clearly came only for unsuccessful candidates -- Diane Feinstein and Scott Newhall.

Beardemphl added that there was harassment problems prior to the election, as well as afterwards, essentially justifying the police position by giving the fact that there were "some bars in the area that had been allowing sex on the premises."

Twenty arrests came at one bar -- the Cinnabar -- and most

were charged simply with obstructing the sidewalk.

Broshears and two other members of GAA, Randy King and Stella Douglas, Monday distributed 300 leaflets at the Hall of Justice charging police with not doing their jobs: "The reason for the nearly 20 murders in this month (in SF) is that the 'man on the beat' is not on the beat, for he is in the Tenderloin, pursuing non-victim 'criminals'."

Contending that gay people are not criminals, but a "persecuted minority," the leaflet calls on the police department to "stop crime, not us."

Unexpected support for the GAA position came yesterday in a letter to the editor in a SF daily from the chairman of the Golden Gate Neighborhood Grocers Association.

Fred Wong stated in his letter that his group demanded greater support from police in stopping the murder-robberies of small grocers in the city. There have been five such murders in recent weeks.

"We want the police protecting us," he said, "And not taking up their time chasing prostitutes and homosexuals, engaged in non-victim rimes."

"I sure wish I would have had Wong's letter to distribute with our leaflet," Broshears told BARB. Broshears appeared Tuesday on the Jim Dunbar TV interview show to detail the GAA position.

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