

Personality of e Month

GRO-C

by Dan Relic



GRO-C

GRO-C: Yes. After the service I met this guy in San Francisco on one of my trips "to the city." We became lovers and I lived with him for about three years there. I stayed for another four years after we broke up then moved to San Jose.

Dan: You ran for Mr. GRO-C (and won) in 1990. What made you decide to do that?

GRO-C: My ex-lover. I used to pick up the paper. I read a lot. It was really rough when I broke up with my lover down here. But when we did I really wasn't sure I wanted to get back into a "gay bar life" or not. I used to read in the paper about all the different things, like come and join Lambda organization, the community center. You know, get involved.

I had thought about it. But, you never really seem to get around to doing it.

Dan: Is that what made you decide to find the time to call and join an organization?

GRO-C: Yeah. I got off the track there, but that's how I got into it (running for GRO-C) because I felt like I had to prove to myself that I was still a good person.

Dan: Now you're the GRO-C.

GRO-C: I understand the reasons for getting involved as GRO-C but why did you decide to pursue another title?

GRO-C: When I ran for GRO-C I ran mainly because of the organization that GRO-C represented, which was Lambda. And I liked the title, I like the sound of it. To me it had more meaning than GRO-C king and queen, and things like that. The GRO-C title seemed like the title I wanted.

After being GRO-C however, I realized that the GRO-C was the highest social title you can hold in the Gay community. It's a whole different crowd you get involved with when you're GRO-C.

Also, I felt I could do what I did with the GRO-C title, which I did a lot of fundraisers. I could do twice as much if I held the GRO-C title. That's why I'm involved in all this.

Dan: Talking about fundraisers, you've had some pretty successful ones. But the Closet Ball, which was financially disastrous, also comes to mind. How do you see the financial problems from that event being resolved or do you?

GRO-C: I feel very in tune with that situation because it was one of my babies. It was my idea right from the beginning to have it at the fairgrounds. It's just too bad that we didn't take other things into consideration at the time. You worked closely with me on it, so I know you understand.

I still think the function could have been better attended if a few more pains had been taken by more than a few of us, which was the case at the time. It was one of the reasons I dropped out of Lambda Association. As you know, I was also Co-Chair at that time. But suddenly it wasn't running as an organization anymore, it was running as a personality thing. And nothing constructive was getting done. Who wants to travel halfway across town to hear bitch fights?

Dan: At this particular point Lambda seems to be flourishing. Do you think the organization can, or should, be revived?

GRO-C: I think it could be. Unfortunately it seems nobody is giving it much time or bothering with it. I would like to see it back in the hands of where it was originated.

Many people feel bad about the fact that it's gone downhill and, for reasons that its dying that makes it a whole lot sadder. It could have all been avoided.

Dan: Interesting. Well, what do you see yourself doing this next year along with the GRO-C?

GRO-C: Well, besides the fundraisers we've already done, we've got our Christmas Ball this Friday (Dec. 3) to raise money and food for the Gay needy families here in San Jose.

We're travelling to a lot of out of

own functions and coronations, but we also are hosting various fundraisers around town.

Dan: How did your recent Fair at Toyon go?

GRO-C: We did real well, we raised over \$900 for Casa. We haven't had a bad thing yet and I hope we don't. Actually, we won't if the community continues to support us as they have been. GRO-C and I do have a show at Toyon coming up on Dec. 12 which is also a benefit for the Christmas Program.

One comment I do want to make that I've been criticized for only Toyon for our functions. There are two main reasons we do so much bar. First of all, Kevan Dan the owner, has always been supportive of the community, more than other man I know, and he has once turned me down including benefits I did as GRO-C.

Also, to me Toyon is the best place in San Jose to do a show, not because of the sound system and stage. You can create a theater

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Needless to say, I was a little surprised that I was going to be interviewing a "Personality of the Month" for Lambda News.

GRO-C: Our current GRO-C was selected as the "personality" to be interviewed and he found it too difficult trying to interview himself (this is usually his column).

I must say it was a most enjoyable experience as GRO-C and I have been friends "ER" social buddies" over the past few years. We haven't seen a lot of each other the past few months and this interview gave us both a chance to dash a little dirt and just catch up on what we've both been doing. Unfortunately, I can't report everything that was said, but the atmosphere at the new Lambda News office (515 Stockton Ave.) was very relaxed and there was a great deal of laughter as we talked about current happenings and GRO-C's plans for the future.

Dan: I may not be as prepared as I'd like to be for this, but let's start with a little background information. Where were you before you came to San Jose?

GRO-C: I was raised mainly in Mountain View where I went to grammar school and high school and also Foothill College. I was born in Vallejo, California.

Dan: What year?

GRO-C: (Laughing) That's none of your business. I've never been one on age, but one finds that when those numbers start going up you start becoming one on age.

Dan: I suppose next you're going to tell me you're prematurely grey...

GRO-C: Definitely. I know you know that. This is not grey hair anyway, it's silver. Yes, it is premature. In fact, twenty years premature. I used to dye my hair. In fact, I dyed my hair until I got out of the Army.

Dan: You were in the Army? For how long?

GRO-C: I went in right from high school, volunteered for the draft. Did two years, completed it, and it was while I was in the service I realized I was gay.

Dan: And you haven't stopped since.

GRO-C: Right! And I haven't stopped since.

Dan: Weren't you in San Francisco before you came here?