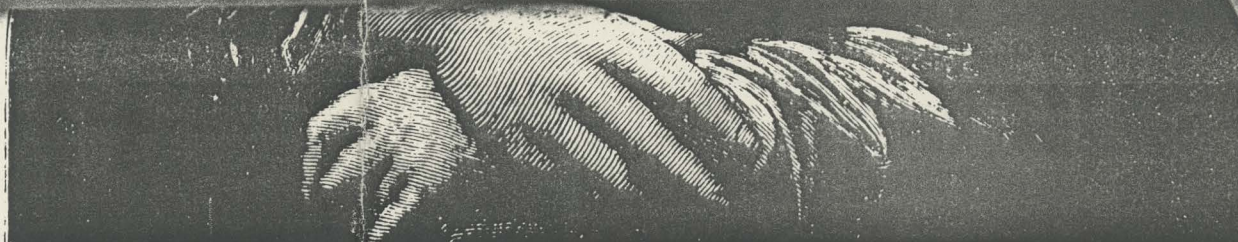


Also from the *Sun-Times* comes news of a new coalition designed solely to intimidate Chicago's aldermen into voting against the city's proposed gay rights ordinance. Amusingly calling itself the Coalition to Reinforce Our Social Standards (CROSS), the group consists of 250 black ministers who spend increasing time and money looking for people to nail. Not so funny is the utter absence of tolerance, forgiveness, and compassion often thought to be part of modern religion. Alderman Perry Hutchinson, who voted against the bill when it came up last year, is quoted as saying that he "personally cannot see discriminating against any minority. But as an alderman, this is not an 'I' concept." Hutchinson thus cites his constituents' bigotry as the central reason for his own cowardice. The same rationale, needless to say, could be used to defend the rights of citizens in Georgia's all-white Forsyth County to keep black people from living there. The fact that thousands of voters are glad to be bigots does not exempt their elected officials from the responsibility of righting social evils.

Dancing Fool

The January issue of *New Criterion*, Hilton Kramer's attempt to keep arts criticism in the hands of big money, featured a particularly vicious critique of dancer Mark Morris by someone named Eva Resnikova. A critic of no repute, Resnikova rips into Morris with the kind of brio the magazine usually reserves for hippies. Resnikova yaps: "Morris is unfailingly described as androgynous*: a puzzling locution, since he does not exhibit any apparent female sexual characteristics—and we've seen all of him. He is, however, effeminate to a degree difficult to stomach even for a veteran dancegoer largely inured to this *déformation professionnelle*" [*Note to Kramer and his copy editor: According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "androgynous" does not refer simply to hermaphrodites, those with both male and female sexual characteristics. The word also means "effeminate." As editors, it is your duty to clean up your writers' sloppy self-contradictions, particularly when they occur a) in critiques of other people's language usage, and b) in adjoining sentences.]

Dance critics high and low are reported to have complained to *The New Criterion*, not only about Resnikova's obnoxious remarks but for the general ineptitude of the review. At least a few of them will point out, no doubt, that this "veteran dancegoer" hasn't even reached middle age yet—she's in her mid-30s. Age aside, though, there is something purely hysterical about the



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nature of the attack, for in one breath Resnikova cackles over the existence of Morris's penis and in the next breath she declares that his lack of traditional *machismo* makes her want to puke. Then, in the very next sentence, Resnikova complains that Morris "allowed his prettiness to deteriorate badly over the last few years," and then goes on to take a snipe at the stylistic "edge of roughness he has always favored." Thus, in four sentences we get the following critique: Mark Morris isn't effeminate even though everyone says he is; Mark Morris is so effeminate he makes me sick; Mark Morris used to be effeminate but he isn't any more; Mark Morris is rough. Resnikova would have been kinder to her readers had she followed Kramer's critical lead and padded her ideological agenda with high-flown adjectives and pompous digressions. While it takes less time to get through an article like Resnikova's than it does to wade through Kramer, right-wing hooley smells ever so much nastier when it's boiled down to sludge.

On the Lighter Side: No Nonsense in the Navy

"Dear Abby," the column begins as usual. " 'Private Person' wrote to you about being in the Army—and wanting to wear women's undergarments. You advised him that the two just wouldn't fit together." Well, okay, standard Abby stuff. But then the outlandish next sentence comes roaring out: "When I was with the Navy SEAL Team in Vietnam, we ALL wore panty hose." Frogmen in L'Eggs? Good gracious, this could be news! But the letter writer, "Ex-Panty Hose Wearer and Glad of It" (aka Jerry J. Fletcher of La Jolla, California), goes on drily to claim that "nylon really cut down on the friction, which could otherwise rub us raw." According to Fletcher, the lingerie also helped remove leeches. "It was always an amazing sight before every mission," the La Jollan asserts rather obviously "to see Navy commandos all camouflaged and painted green and black,

struggling to get their hairy bodies into the panty hose." No doubt. But he neglects to enlighten Abby's millions of readers on certain key points. Were the frogmen upset by runs? Were they fond of colors, or did they favor "nude"? And how did the Navy boys feel while wearing hose? Abby shrewdly senses the absence of an answer to the crucial last question, so she supplies one using her own (you'll pardon the expression) criteria: "You Navy commandos wore panty hose openly, out of necessity, but the aforementioned Army private wore women's lingerie for kicks, which is quite another matter." Maybe, maybe not; that's a question only our brave sailors can answer.

• **Insert Shots:** The big *Mona Lisa/Arts & Antiques* uproar was fascinating on many levels, not the least of which was the dismissive reaction of almost everyone. The article itself was clumsily written and poorly argued, but the basic point was worthwhile to consider. The best part of the whole affair, though, was the wonderful cover design, a beautiful reproduction of the painting with the ambiguous words "Her Identity Revealed." Since the article is largely concerned with Leonardo's proto-gay sensibility, the cover slyly plays on the identity of the "her" in question, namely the great artist and thinker, Mary da Vinci. Mona, of course, seems to have gotten the joke. • Giving credit where it's due shouldn't be a bitter experience, but in the wake of Jane Brody's inane "sissy boys" piece, lauding the *New York Times* is difficult. Nevertheless, Philip S. Gutis's "Homosexual Parents Winning Some Custody Cases" (January 21) was fair-minded in both language and substance. Gutis cited various points of view, and he did so with the kind of sobriety that eludes big-mouths like Brody. Best quote: Father John F. Harvey, who argues that custody decisions should not "depend so much on the parent's ability to raise the child; rather they should depend on the model of human sexuality the child will be exposed to." Gutis gives this bizarre remark its own paragraph, as if to further dramatize the good father's stupidity. ■