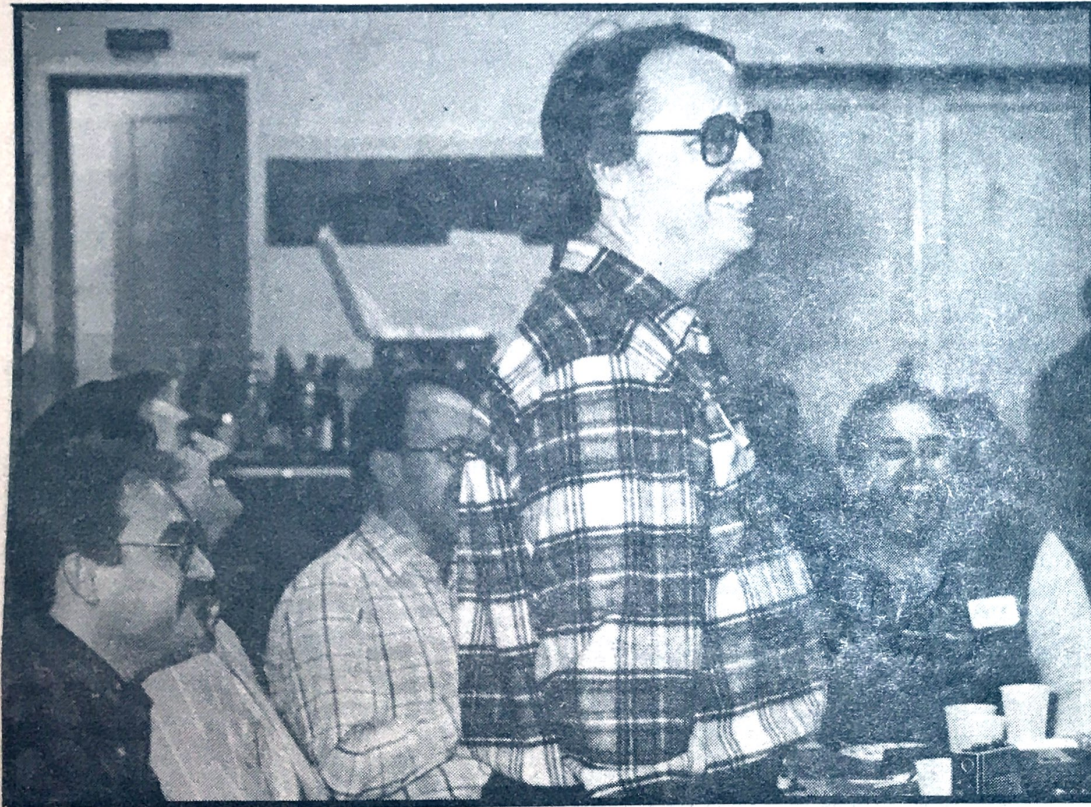


# David Bunnell speaks at HTG

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by Bob Correa

Nearly 250 people attended the January 11th monthly meeting of High Tech Gays to hear guest speaker, David Bunnell, Editor-in-Chief of *PC World* and *Mac World* magazines and Chairman of the Board of PCW Communications.

In addition to founding *PC World* and *Mac World* in 1982 and 1983 respectively, Bunnell was the founder of *Personal Computing* magazine in 1978 and *PC Magazine* in 1981.

In the November, 1986 issue of *PC World* and *Mac World*

Bunnell's editorial was headlined, "Coming Out of the PC Closet."

The editorial was an attack on Georgia's sodomy law, the legislation that was the basis for the U.S. Supreme Court's *Hardwick* decision last June.

Bunnell, who is straight, called Georgia, "the home of an oppressive law that conflicts with the very vision that compelled the growth of personal computers."

He emphasized that "the PC world should think twice about supporting high technology development in states that lack a

decent social climate for high tech to operate in."

High Tech Gays invited him to the monthly meeting to discuss his editorial.

Usually all the positive articles are in the gay press; it was terrific to see a positive article outside where people who need to see it will.

The idea for the editorial Bunnell says, came after he received a letter from governor Frank Harris of Georgia inviting him on a technology tour of the Atlanta area.

The intention was that Bunnell would come back and write

a "glowing" column about the area.

His response to the Governor was a two paragraph letter stating that he could not support high technology development in Georgia until they repealed the sodomy law.

Somehow the letter was copied and the Atlanta sales office for *PC World/Mac World* began to receive calls from advertisers who were upset.

Bunnell said he wrote the column so they would know what he was thinking about.

Since the column was published, Bunnell has received over 2000 letters of which about 40 percent suggest that the column was not appropriate for that type of magazine.

About another 40 percent disagreed (ie. supported the sodomy law).

Only 20 percent of the letters were in support of Bunnell's comments.

"I got all kinds of letters from bigots, including serious bigots" says Bunnell.

The letters ranged from comments like, "Frankly I think that psychedelic drug users contributed more to PC development than homosexuals," to "No one has the right to spread the curse of AIDS."

The impact on the magazine initially has been significant but Bunnell feels that the effect will be temporary.

Seven pages of advertising were cancelled including ads from companies in Georgia such as Peach Tree Software and Quandram.

The Executive Director of the Salvation Army sent a disturbing letter along with a request to

cancel his subscription.

About 500 other readers across the nation cancelled their subscriptions.

Letters were written to presidents of other companies asking them to withdraw their advertising from the magazine.

Letters were even sent to the president of *PC World* asking him to fire Bunnell.

Bunnell was not concerned since he is the Chairman of the Board.

On the positive side, a consulting company called Tele Staffing sent a letter through MCI Mail to high tech companies in Atlanta and to the Governor to endorse the *PC World* editorial and even going beyond the recommendation made by the editorial.

Tele Staffing has a company policy not to recommend for purchase any software or hardware manufactured in the state of Georgia until the sodomy law is repealed.

On the humorous side, a letter from Montana stated: "Come to Montana, we don't have any laws like that; as far as I know if anyone sneaks into our bedroom, we shoot them."

Bunnell thinks it is very important for writers in technology to write about real social issues because technology has the potential to do either good or bad.

"Those of us who are creating the technology have an obligation to steer it to have a positive impact on our culture.

"I believe that very deeply, I hope you do too."

David Bunnell's talk was followed by thunderous applause and a standing ovation.

