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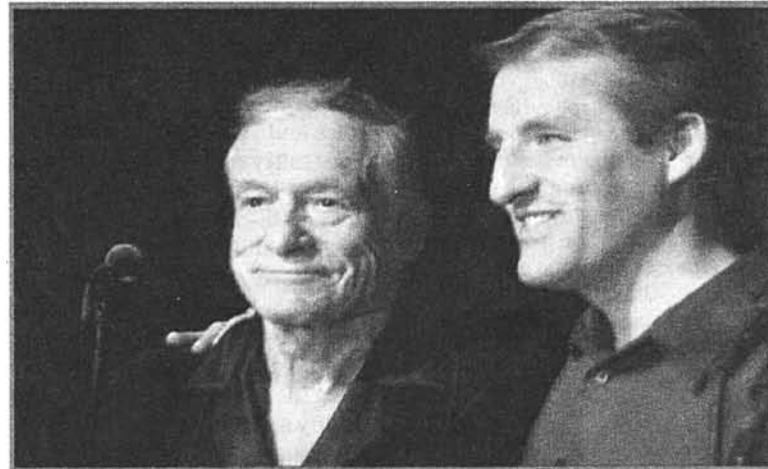
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SOCIAL CLIMES

Men on a mission at the mansion

THE gates at the Playboy Mansion don't swing open quite like they used to, but when you consider that the man who resides at the end of the driveway turns 80 today, that's to be expected. Yet Hugh Hefner's passions still run deep, and when he learned that the Marijuana Policy Project needed digs for a fundraiser, the mansion once again slipped on its party dress.

A nattily attired crowd of 600 paid \$650 a head to attend the March 30 soiree benefiting MPP, a D.C.-based advocacy group "dedicated to ending the war on marijuana users." The male-skewing attendees had heavy issues on their minds as they were bused in from a nearby parking lot. "I've worked on behalf of decriminalization issues for 20 years," said one 40ish man, fresh off a plane from Chicago. A journalist several rows back worked to clear up a misunderstanding about her credentials. "No, not The Times," she said to her seatmate.



Authentic Entertainment

HOSTS: *Hugh Hefner, left, accepts the Marijuana Policy Project's Pioneer Award from MPP chief Rob Kampia at the March 30 fundraiser.*

"High Times." But once the tram rolled through the mansion gates (past "Caution: Bunnies at Play" signs), the mood quickly lightened.

Partygoers were soon roaming the green acreage, but the only exotic thing in the air was vintage reggae from the DJs. An admonition on the invitation had warned against anyone going ganja, but with several open bars and circulating hors d'oeuvres, no one seemed to mind. The cellphone-cam was the go-to gadget of the evening, and revelers all over the property could be heard making calls with the same opening line: "Hi, it's me. You won't believe where I'm standing right

now." That task completed; it was time for "Bunny & Me" photo ops.

A sprinkling of celebs such as Adam Carolla, Tommy Chong and Michelle Phillips strolled about, checking out silent-auction lithographs from Dali and Picasso. Comic Rick Overton delivered a killer opening, introduced MPP chief Rob Kampia, and then Hefner materialized. Looking frail but dapper in satiny black loungewear, Hef exhorted the troops to mobilize like back in the '60s, while lamenting the inertia that followed in the '70s. And then he flashed a crooked grin, the seen-it-all grin of a man in his 80s.

— MARK SACHS