

POTPOURRI

Ex-hippie dancing again

By ROB THOMAS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Gregory Hines strolled down an oceanfront Venice walkway, pausing to admire the well-dressed man playing a Strauss waltz by rubbing his finger on an assemblage of brandy glasses.

Then he nodded to the bearded man who wore a towel as a turban and sang and played guitar while rollerskating through the beach crowd.

He went to a table at a sidewalk cafe and ordered fruit juice and soup.

"I love Venice," the 39-year-old dancer-actor said, studying the passing parade of muscle men, bathing beauties, tourists and bums. "This is where I was a hippie."

That was in 1973-78, when Gregory Hines dropped out of a dancing career that had occupied virtually his entire life.

"I was 27 years old," Hines said. "I don't remember when I wasn't in show business. First I worked with my brother, Maurice, as the Hines Kids. Then our father joined us and we toured as Hines, Hines and Dad. Finally my brother and I worked together, but we didn't

get along.

"It was a real eye-opener when I became a hippie. All my life, someone always took care of me — my manager, my mother, my agent, my father. Suddenly, I was on my own. It was a scary period in my life."

That time seems long ago. He has since become a Broadway star ("Eubie," "Sophisticated Lady"), a Las Vegas headliner and now is enjoying a growing film career. Praised for last year's "The Cotton Club," he co-stars with Mikhail Baryshnikov in Columbia Pictures' "White Nights."

"White Nights" provides Hines' greatest opportunity, both as a dancer and actor. He portrays an American dancer who has defected to the Soviet Union because of disillusionment with the Vietnam War. He has potent scenes with Baryshnikov and with Isabella Rossellini, who plays Hines' Russian wife.

Hines, who said he was ejected from a ballet class after one lesson when he was 9 years old, was fascinated by Baryshnikov's technique. Before filming started, the pair spent three weeks together in a dance studio.

"I taught him to do a little tap," he said, "and he taught me how to drink vodka." □

Michener's 'Texas' is big

By DOLORES BARCLAY
Associated Press

NEW YORK — If you took all the books James Michener has ever sold, you'd probably have enough paper to blanket California.

He writes big, gargantuan books — too long for a weekend at the beach or a Sunday afternoon read, but just the right length for 30 days in the county jail or a cruise to South America.

His latest book, "Texas" (Random House, \$21.95), is 1,096 pages long. It's stuffed with all the obscurities, oddities, naughtiness and niceness of that sprawling, eclectic state.

As he's done in the past with such geographical and historical novels as "Hawaii," "Chesapeake" and "Poland," Michener has armed himself with lots of facts.

He will tell you about honky-tonks and the Texas rangers, about cotton production, pomegranates and longhorns.

Michener takes his time unfolding the history and culture of the Lone Star State, starting in 1535. The Alamo pops up, so does the Galveston tidal wave of 1900. His fleet of fictional characters trod with those who

really lived: Sam Houston, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, Jim Bowie.

"I originally used to compare Texas with Montana," the author said one day while visiting his publisher in New York. "You can write an absolutely wonderful book about Montana, particularly if the setting is not important."

"But what differentiates Texas from Montana? ... Texas had to fight its own war of independence; Texas had its own charismatic characters. ... Texas is always a little larger than life."

He and his wife, Mari, have lived throughout the United States and their homes are reflected in Michener's best-selling titles.

They lived in Lubbock while he researched the current work. They now live in Sitka, Alaska, soaking up the sights for the next epic.

Michener is 78 and has sold more than 60 million copies of his books. Random House made a first printing of 750,000 for "Texas."

"I'm pretty frightened about that," Michener said. "I don't want to see any of my books on the remainder shelf. To have 1 million copies of a book sold is amazing. They took a heck of a risk." □

40 percent of U.S. households watch pray TV evangelists

Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — A nationwide survey finds that TV evangelists are watched in 40 percent of U.S. households with television sets at least once a month, a much bigger audience than had been expected.

It was termed comparable to top-rated prime time shows.

The A.C. Nielsen Co. report, commissioned by the Christian Broadcasting Network, indicates that TV evangelists have not exaggerated the size of their audiences as much as had been believed, says Jeffery K. Hadden, a University of Virginia professor and president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

According to the study, more than 33 million households, 40.2 percent of all homes in the United States, watched at least one of 10 television preachers for at least six minutes once a month.

Nielsen spokesman William Behanna said

that by comparison, most top-rated network prime time shows also reach about 40 percent of U.S. viewers.

The survey's results, Hadden said, indicate that television evangelists, not President Reagan, are behind the nation's current swing back to a more conservative lifestyle, and that conservative Christians are "coming out of the closet."

The study's findings were reported at the annual convention of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association being held in Savannah.

The Nielsen Co. survey was commissioned by CBN, headquartered in Virginia Beach, Va., because of the debate over the size of the audiences attracted to religious programs.

According to Behanna, the survey marks the first time the viewership of the religious programs was analyzed with the same methods used for the network ratings.

The top-ranked show was CBN's flagship

program, "The 700 Club," hosted by the Rev. M.G. "Pat" Robertson. Robertson has said he may seek the Republican nomination for the presidency in 1988. The show reaches 4.4 million people, or 19 percent of American viewers, once a month.

"Jimmy Swaggart" was second in popularity. Other top-ranked programs, not listed in order of audience size, were Jerry Falwell's "The Old Time Gospel Hour," Rex Humbard, Oral Roberts' "Expect a Miracle," Robert Shuller's "Hour of Power," Jim Bakker's "PTL Club," "Kenneth Copeland," "Day of Discovery," and another Swaggart program, "A Study In The Word."

An earlier study, conducted by the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, found that the TV evangelists were not siphoning off funds or participation from the churches.

The viewing of the TV evangelism programs was found to be largely supplementary to support of the local churches and worshipping in them. □