

University Recognition Expected Soon for New MTSU Lambda Association

By **JEFF ELLIS**
Managing Editor

MURFREESBORO—Recognition of a lesbian and gay student group at Middle Tennessee State University is likely to be formalized in "a matter of days," according to Dan Webster, newly named president of the MTSU Lambda Association.

The formation of the support group for lesbians and gay men on the Murfreesboro campus is the result of an anti-gay sentiment which has been simmering throughout the current semester, organizers said. The prevailing anti-gay mood at MTSU has been attributed to a series of articles which appeared earlier this semester in *Sidelines*, the student newspaper.

The initial newspaper accounts, written by student journalist Tony Stinnett, were followed by numerous letters to the editor firing salvos at the lesbian and gay community on campus.

Since then, however, the mood seems to have shifted slightly, Webster said.

"There have been some very positive letters to the editor in support of our organization," he said. "The most recent, which appeared in Monday's edition, called for the people who are against us to 'get the hell off our backs.'"

Formal recognition of the new group is expected within the next few days, according to Ted White, MTSU director of minority affairs, whose office is in charge of all student organizations.

"Their application is being processed. We did have to ask them to make some additions to their constitution so that it would meet University policy," White said.

The changes, he said, had nothing to do with the nature of the organization: "Probably 95% of all student organiza-

tions have to make some minor changes in the first draft of their constitution. We don't foresee any problems with this group being sanctioned."

According to White, MTSU Lambda's application and accompanying proposed constitution will be forwarded to the office of Vice President for Student Affairs Robert Lance who is expected to affix his signature to the application.

"We must make sure their constitution meets all the necessary criteria," White said.

Charter member John Weaver said the changes called for in the group's constitution set the numbers of members needed for a quorum and to fill the organization's elective offices.

"At first I thought it was persecution when they asked us to make some changes, but the points they made were valid," Webster said.

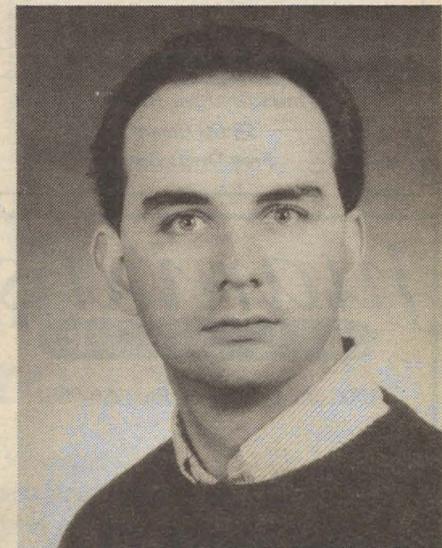
A special meeting aimed at attracting charter members resulted in some 30 students signing the constitution—far more than the five signatures needed—including a number of heterosexual students who lent their moral support to the fledgling organization.

"These are my friends and I'll give them any kind of support they need," said sophomore Vickie Howard. "People on the MTSU campus are basically closed to any liberal movement within a straight, closed, clean society."

"And they don't think gay men or lesbians should be allowed the same rights as everyone else. Those people are wrong and that's why I'm here."

The group's first planning session attracted some 10 people, while their second meeting Wednesday night drew 15 to chart the group's course for the coming months.

"We're off to kind of a slow, but very positive start," Webster said. "We're really just hoping for the best. We've gotten some good press and that's added to the enthusiasm expressed



Dan Webster, newly-elected president of Middle Tennessee State University Lambda Association, a new organization for lesbians and gay men at the school. University officials are considering the group's application for recognition. —FILE PHOTO

by the membership."

The organization of the MTSU group comes almost ten years after a similar group at Austin Peay State University was forced to take the route of the courts to gain recognition.

In 1979, federal district court Judge Thomas Wiseman ruled in favor of the APSU group after they were denied official recognition by then-APSU-President Robert Riggs. Since that decision, lesbian and gay groups on campuses governed by the State Board of Regents have met with little opposition from administrators.

Dr. Sam Ingram, MTSU president, earlier this month said he was unaware of any obstacles to the group's formation and did not "see there being a problem" with formal recognition.

"University procedures are explicit and if they meet the same conditions as every other group they will be approved," Ingram said. "I haven't been asked to pass judgment on other groups so I see no reason to pass judgment on this group." •



MTSU's Kirksey Old Main, the campus building whose men's room was featured in a student newspaper article about homosexuals. The story generated a campus-wide controversy that led to the formation of MTSU Lambda Association. —FILE PHOTO

Wolf Conviction Challenged

A juror's "intimate relationship" with a court officer may be used to overturn the child sexual abuse conviction of Nashville physician John Stuart Wolf.

Juror Lesa Wilson's relationship with Jesse Jenkins, who repeatedly asserted that Wolf was guilty of charges of sexual abuse of his six-year-old son, led her to influence the jury's conviction of Wolf, according to his attorneys.

Wolf's lead counsel, Nashville attorney Lewis Conner, has asked Davidson Circuit Court Judge Ann Lacy Johns to grant a new trial on the grounds that the relationship alone was enough to make a fair verdict impossible. •

HIV Spares Sperm Cells

By **STUART BIVIN**
Editor

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) believed to cause AIDS does not infect sperm cells, according to researchers at the State University of New York (SUNY) in Syracuse.

Dr. Bernard Poesz and his coworkers have been studying the behavior of the virus in human semen. The group found that the virus infects only cells of the seminal fluid, the liquid in which sperm cells are suspended.

According to *The New York Times*, the finding may mean that it could be possible for men infected by HIV to father children through a form of artificial insemination.

The group's research has also yielded a major unanswered question. Both the SUNY team and another working independently have found a marked decline in the percentage of men with AIDS and ARC who carry the virus in their semen. Poesz said that the virus lives in only about one fifth of the semen samples of infected men, as opposed to about 70 per cent of those samples tested several years ago. The virus is found in blood samples from practically all those infected.

The scientists say that the virus should occur in the seminal fluid at the same rate as in the blood, because semen contains white blood

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New Feature!
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looking for Lily,
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Dates

October

Mondays

Nashville CARES
AIDS/ARC Support Group. 6:30pm. HIV Education Support Group. 6pm. Family Support Group. 6:30pm. Info phone 615 385-1510.

Lambda Group
Closed Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for gay men and lesbians, Unitarian Church, Nashville. 8pm.

MAGNET (Married and Gay Network)
New group for married gay men. 1st & 3rd Mondays only. MCC-Nashville. 8pm. Info phone 615 320-0288.

Tuesdays

Vanderbilt Lambda Association
Meeting for gay and lesbian Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff and alumni. Vanderbilt Divinity School, Room G 23. Nashville. 5:30pm. Info phone 615 298-9931.

Al-Anon
Open meeting, MCC-Nashville. 6:30pm.

Nashville CARES
HIV Education Support Groups. 7pm. Info phone 615 385-1510.

Sober Sisters (Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous)
Closed meeting, MCC-Nashville. 8pm.

Wednesdays

Sex Addicts Anonymous
Closed meeting for gay men and lesbians. MCC-Nashville. 5:30pm.

Nashville CARES
AIDS/ARC Couples Support Group. 5:30pm. AIDS/ARC Support Group. 6:30pm. HIV Support Group. 7pm. Info phone 615 385-1510.

MTSU Lambda Association
Meeting for lesbian and gay Middle Tennessee State University students, faculty, staff, and alumni. 7pm. Info phone 615 893-2589.

Thursdays

Nashville CARES
HIV Support Group. 6:30pm. Info phone 615 385-1510.

Alternatives (Alcoholics Anonymous)
Closed meeting for lesbians and gay men, MCC-Nashville. 8pm.

Lesbian Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOAA)
Meeting. 8pm. Nashville. Info phone 615 385-4776 or 615 352-5823.

Fridays

Sexaholics Anonymous
Closed meeting, MCC-Nashville. 5pm.

Alcoholics Anonymous Program Study Group
Meeting, Belmont United Methodist, Nashville. 7:30 pm.

Saturdays

Nashville CARES
AIDS/ARC Support Group. 4pm. Info phone 615 385-1510.

Metropolitan Community Church-Nashville
Mortgage Meal, all you can eat. 7:30pm. \$5.

Gay Cable Network
Cablecast, Nashville Viacom Channel 35 (Community Access Television). 8pm.

Sundays

Manna New Life Church
Worship service, 11am. Nashville. Info phone 615 833-8581 or 615 834-4491.

Metropolitan Community Church-Nashville
Worship services, 11am and 7pm. Info phone 615 320-0288.

SPECIAL Events

Sunday, October 16

Pride Week '89 Committee Planning meeting. 1401 Cedar. 1pm. Info phone 297-4293.

Saturday, October 22

Women and Humor Middle Tennessee Women's Studies Association meeting. *Baby Snook's Daughters: Women as Children in American Comedy*, Sara Dunne. Middle Tennessee St Univ, Murfreesboro, James Union Bldg, Dining Room B. 9:30am. Free. Info phone 343-6043.

Thursday, October 20

Film *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* Vanderbilt Lambda Association. 220 Garland Hall, Vanderbilt. 7pm. \$1 donation.

Saturday, October 29

Halloween Party Talent show and raffle, follows Mortgage Meal. MCC-Nashville. 8:30pm. Dinner & party, \$6. Party only, \$3. Info phone 320-0288, 885-8202 or 391-0222.

Monday, October 31

HALLOWEEN

Thursday, November 3

Film *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, Vanderbilt Lambda Association. 220 Garland Hall, Vanderbilt. 7pm. \$1 donation.

Sunday, November 6

Concert *Romanovsky & Phillips*, "the gay Smothers Brothers," with Marianne Osiel. First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1808 Woodmont Blvd. Sponsored by Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA). \$7. Info phone Scott Osten, 385-1510 or 269-4283.

Monday, November 7

Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA) Monthly meeting. Towne House Tea Room, 165 8th Ave North. 7pm. Free. Info phone 297-4293.

Saturday, October 29
Ladies' Choice
9:30 p.m.
\$3 cover

Monday, October 31
Halloween Costume Party

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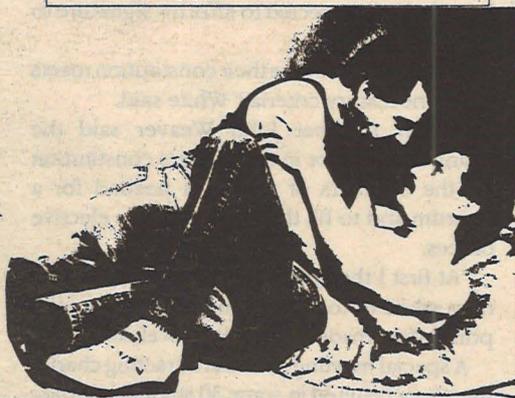
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Full Moon Party
Saturday, October 22
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...HIV-free sperm cells

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cells that are the virus' main target.

A research team led by Dr. Suraiya Rasheed of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles also has said that it can no longer find HIV in most semen samples from infected men, while blood samples from the same men virtually always show the presence of the virus. A University of Minnesota has reported that it, too, finds the virus in only a small proportion of semen samples.

A new HIV-detection technique, called polymerase chain reaction (PCR), can spot the genetic material of the virus with extraordinary accuracy, even when the virus is dormant (not reproducing itself).

Because the virus seems not to infect sperm cells, it is possible that the sperm cells could be separated from the infected seminal fluid and used for artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization, techniques which have been used by some lesbians and gay men to have children. Uninfected sperm cells, either carried in a sterile medium or placed directly in the uterus, could be used to fertilize an egg without infecting either mother or child.

"Technically, it can work," *The New York Times* quoted Dr. Maria Bustillo of the Fairfax, Virginia, Genetics and IVF Institute as saying.

Bustillo said that the seminal fluid does not enter the uterus.

Instead, it is stopped at the cervix (the entrance to the uterus) by mucus, and the sperm alone enters the uterus.

Infected seminal fluid can still infect the woman through the vaginal wall.

Infertility researchers often use direct placement of sperm in the uterus "as an empirical treatment when we don't know what's causing infertility or when patients have a cervical problem, such as when they don't produce enough mucus," Bustillo said.

Still, the new detection method is not infallible. "PCR is sensitive," Poesz said, "but it is not infinitely sensitive...I tell [infected patients whose semen contains no detectable HIV] that's an extraordinary risk to take. How can I tell them that the semen sample I analyzed today is the same as the one they will use to impregnate their wives with?"

The one thing scientists are sure about is that they're not certain how to interpret the findings.

"I don't see any obvious explanation for it," said Dr. Jonathan Gold of New York's Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. "Like so many other things in AIDS, if we were smarter, we'd know what it means." •

Briefs

After Shutdown, FDA Speeds Approval Process

From **STAFF REPORTS**

Only eight days after AIDS activists led by the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) shut down the agency's Rockville, Maryland, headquarters, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has implemented new procedures that allow for faster approval of promising treatments for AIDS and other life-threatening diseases.

Frank Young, FDA Commissioner, announced the changes Wednesday, acknowledging that the changes were essentially a duplication of the rule exceptions used to speed the approval of the AIDS-treatment drug AZT.

Despite the fact that the announcement comes three weeks before the presidential election and refers to Vice-President George Bush as having led the reform effort, Young repeatedly denied that the changes were politically motivated.

AIDS Action Council executive director Jean McGuire passed out statements before Young's news conference accusing the agency of political opportunism and of misleading the public. The statement charged that "the rationale for timing the announcement at this point is transparent at best."

Young said that Congressional authorization of 126 staff positions last year and next year will enable the agency to test and process any new potential AIDS drugs.

The new two-phase approval process replaces the agency's old three-phase requirement. •

Washington Jury Says No to Homo Panic Defense

From **STAFF REPORTS**

The "homosexual panic" legal defense as justification for anti-lesbian and anti-gay violence has been thrown out by a court in at least one state.

A Tacoma, Washington, jury has found Eddie Wayne Bell, 40, guilty of murder in the beating death of Peter Brudevold, 61, in spite of defense attorneys' arguments that the killing was an emotional response to a fear of homosexual advance. Bell's attorneys argued the so-called "homosexual panic defense" justified the killing.

Brudevold was mayor of Ruston, Washington.

A Pierce County Superior Court jury rejected Bell's claim that his judgment was impaired by his "intense fear of homosexuals, causing his mind to shift to autopilot" when Brudevold allegedly reached for his crotch.

Bell said that he had been gang-raped in a Texas prison 20 years ago.

Area lesbian and gay activists were pleased with the rejection of the defense. "This sends a message that (there are) defense attorneys who think a 'homophobia defense' is useful," according to George Bakan, editor of the *Seattle Gay News*. "What this [verdict] means is that a group of citizens showed great wisdom and recognized murder when they saw it."

Under Washington state sentencing guidelines, Bell could get anywhere from 13 to 17 years in prison.

There is no indication that Bell's attorneys will appeal the verdict. •

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Quotes

"Shut up, fag!"

—Sally Dornan, wife of anti-gay U.S. Representative Robert Dornan (R-California), to an AIDS activist who challenged her husband's AIDS stands at a rally in Garden Grove, California. Sally Dornan later apologized for her outburst, saying that she was upset because she had found out that her brother had AIDS. Rep. Dornan, meanwhile, announced to the U.S. house the next week that his positions on homosexuals and on AIDS issues would not change.

"I just might be enticed to sit atop a billboard until...Vanderbilt's Roy Kramer starts treating female sportswriters with the same courtesy he treats males...[and Nashville Metro] Councilman George Armistead is the keynote speaker at a gay rights rally."

— *Tennessean* columnist Jerry Thompson commenting on Duncan Stewart, Nashville radio personality who is sitting atop a billboard until the University of Tennessee wins a football game. Kramer has recently refused to admit female reporters to Vanderbilt football

locker rooms, causing a rift with the *Atlanta Constitution* and an apology from Vanderbilt Chancellor Joe B. Wyatt. Armistead caused an uproar earlier this month when he attempted to force Viacom Cablevision in Nashville to cancel *Gay Cable Network*, which he called a "sick and depraved...movie about queers."

"And a third member of the Dukakis family made news last week when *Dossier* magazine reported that John Dukakis, son of the Democratic nominee, was once a lover of Harry Hamlin. Of course, it was only a movie romance. Dukakis portrayed one of Hamlin's boyfriends in the 1982 movie *Making Love*. Reportedly the film credit does not appear on John's resume."

—Note in the *Philadelphia Gay News* on the actor son of Democratic presidential nominee Michael Dukakis.

"I thought I could handle straights moving into the Castro. However, today I saw a guy pushing a baby carriage — and he was wearing wingtips!"

— *San Franciscan* John-Michael Olexin in a letter to the editor of the Bay Area Reporter.

Dykes to Watch Out For

The BIG PICTURE
© 1988 BY ALISON BECHDEL

ON A LONG WALK WITH CLARICE, MO RELIES ON HER INBORN TACT AND ADROIT INTERPERSONAL SKILLS TO BROACH A DELICATE SUBJECT...

So, CLARICE... WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO TELL TONI YOU CHEATED ON HER WHILE SHE WAS OUT OF TOWN?

WHAT?! I DIDN'T "CHEAT" ON HER, MO! AND BESIDES, IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!

WELL, I WISH IT WASN'T. BUT THIS IS A SMALL COMMUNITY, AND LIKE IT OR NOT, OTHER PEOPLE KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. IT'S JUST NOT FAIR THAT TONI DOESN'T.

OH, MO... SHE'S SO HURT AND UPSET THINKING GINGER AND I JUST KISSED... I CAN'T TELL HER WE SLEPT TOGETHER!

LISTEN, CLARICE. GIVEN THE SPEED NEWS TRAVELS IN THIS TOWN, SHE'LL FIND OUT SOON WHETHER YOU TELL HER OR NOT.

I KNOW... I HAVE TO TELL HER. (SNIFF) OH, JEEZ, SHE'LL NEVER (SOB) TRUST ME AGAIN! WHAT A MESS!

YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!

WHAT EVENING...

MY LIFE IS A MESS.

AW, TONI, IT'S NOT THAT BAD!

I FIND OUT THAT MY HAPPY, SECURE, SIX-YEAR RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN A TOTAL SHAM AND IT'S NOT THAT BAD?!

TONI, COME ON! I KNOW YOU'RE IN A LOT OF PAIN, BUT YOU HAPTA LOOK AT THE GRAND SCHEME OF THINGS! LISTEN, THE ENVIRONMENT IS POLLUTED BEYOND THE POINT OF NO RETURN...

NICKELS AND DIMES ARE ALLOCATED FOR AIDS RESEARCH WHILE BILLIONS GO INTO RADAR SYSTEMS FOR BLOWING UP CIVILIANS IN THE PERSIAN GULF...

AND WE'VE GOT TO SPEND THE NEXT TWO MONTHS BEING ASSAULTED WITH HYPOCRITICAL HYPE AS TWO MORALLY BANKRUPT WHITE BOYS GEAR UP FOR ANOTHER ELECTORAL FARCE!

HAVING A ROUGH TIME IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP KINDA PALES IN COMPARISON, HUH?

GEE, MO... THANKS. I CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON YOU.

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Oooh, ghoulfriend.

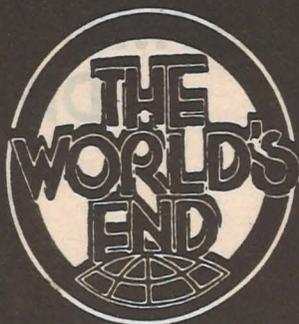


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By **SHERRE DRYDEN**
 Entertainment Editor

Up the road in Paducah, Kentucky, about two hours from Nashville, is Chez Tomlin.

Owned and operated by Lily Tomlin's mother Lillie Mae and brother Richard, Chez Tomlin is a shrine along the way for pilgrims travelling to Chicago to see *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*.

"Come to Chez Tomlin for great shopping and fine dining. For the best food and most elegant atmosphere in town, join Curtis Grace from the Ninth Street House for lunch upstairs. Meet Lily's mother and brother. Last, but not least, see the Lily Tomlin Room with Ernestine the Operator, Edith Ann's rocking chair and much more!" Chez Tomlin's advertising flier proclaims.

Inside the shop, a restored commercial building in downtown Paducah, are the tea room; a gift shop ("All the decorating is done by Richard"); Sans Souci, a lingerie shop (!) and, of course, the Lily Tomlin Room. Lillie Mae was sitting at the gift shop cash register last Thursday. Richard breezed in a few minutes later.

Lily's mom and dad, the story goes, were reared in Paducah but moved to Detroit where the Tomlin kids were born. Lily and Richard spent their summers in Paducah as children. When Mr. Tomlin died 17 years ago, Lillie Mae decided to return to Paducah. When Lillie Mae had open heart surgery three years ago, Richard moved to Paducah to be near her.

Richard and his co-manager Michael Langston decided over dinner at New York's Tavern on the Green one Christmas Eve to open a business in Paducah. They bought the building in April, 1986; the shop opened that October.

The Lily Tomlin Room is filled with Lily memorabilia, some fascinating, some inexpli-

cable. There are movie posters, periodicals with Lily on the cover, photographs and a life-size Ernestine the Operator who does a recorded comedy schtick. There is also a completely unexplained set of false teeth. Something from Lily's childhood, perhaps? Or are we just not devoted enough to know without having to be told?

Lillie Mae gives tours on Thursday, Friday and Saturday and Lily herself has made two public appearances at Chez Tomlin. Michael said Lily's fans fly in from all over, seeing nothing of Paducah but Chez Tomlin.

"People stop by all the time so they can go backstage at the show and tell Lily they've been to Chez Tomlin."

Michael describes Lily as "Very much a family person, close to her mother and brother. There's a lot of family bond."

"She usually visits when she has a break from the show, two days at the most. They usually end up at Kentucky Lake. I've met a lot of stars and worked with a lot of stars," Michael continued. "As a person and as a star, Lily is one of the most sincere and generous people I've ever met in my life."

The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe is at Chicago's Shubert Theatre through November 20. Then it is on to Detroit for three weeks followed by a Canadian tour.

Written and directed by Jane Wagner and

The Search for Signs of Lily



chez Tomlin and fine Tomlin

Break down the frame of reference, and what we think of as the Truth need no longer be so. No matter how funny the play becomes (and it is *very* funny) do not allow this message to be obscured.

The episodes Trudy's brain zaps the audience into concern, among others, Agnes Angst, a punk adolescent locked out of the house by despairing parents; her grandparents Lud and Marie; Brandy and Tina, prostitutes being interviewed by a male writer; and a group of friends who've been together throughout the feminist movement.

The voices, with the exception of Lud, are all women. Each is somehow distanced from mainstream society, either because of class (Marie), sexuality (Brandy, Tina and the lesbian feminists), politics (Agnus and the feminists), or insanity (Trudy).

Strangely, perhaps (perhaps not) it is these peripheral women, not heterosexual, middle-class, white men the "aliens" contact in their search for intelligent life.

These women, who are themselves "aliens", are Wagner and Tomlin's sources for a re-visioning of society.

The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe is, then, an exhilarating experience for anyone who has experienced life as an alien; a sort of validation of difference. Perhaps this is why the Chicago audience was so unexpectedly diverse.

There were many women, many who seemed to be lesbians, but many who were not. There were women in furs and women in Birkenstocks, silk dresses and jeans (or should it be Indian cotton draw-string pants?). They may not all be willing to acknowledge the subversiveness of the act of revering Lily Tomlin, and through her Jane Wagner, but most would acknowledge their reverence. •

starring Lily Tomlin, *Search* is a performance not to be missed. When it opened, *New York Times* critic Frank Rich said it was "the most genuinely subversive comedy to be produced on Broadway in years."

Marilyn French calls *Signs* "something that could hearten and encourage every person who believes this nation needs humane redirection."

Lily's one-woman show is based on the premise that aliens (the kind from outer space) are communicating with bag lady Trudy. Trudy has been "certified" insane, but her madness is really another way of looking at society. We accept her communication with the aliens and through admitting that she hears them, we admit that a different kind of hearing — of all communication — is possible.

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"They simply don't have our frame of reference. I show 'em this can of Campbell's tomato soup. I say, 'This is soup.' Then I show 'em a picture of Andy Warhol's painting of a can of Campbell's tomato soup. I say, 'This is art.'"

The soup routine, which takes place early in the play and is repeated later, is both a clue and a reminder.

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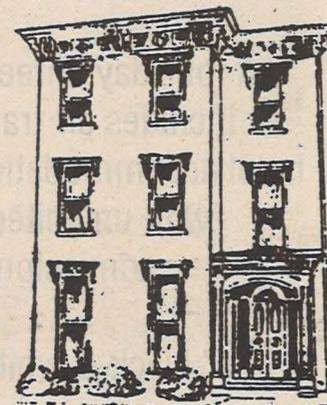


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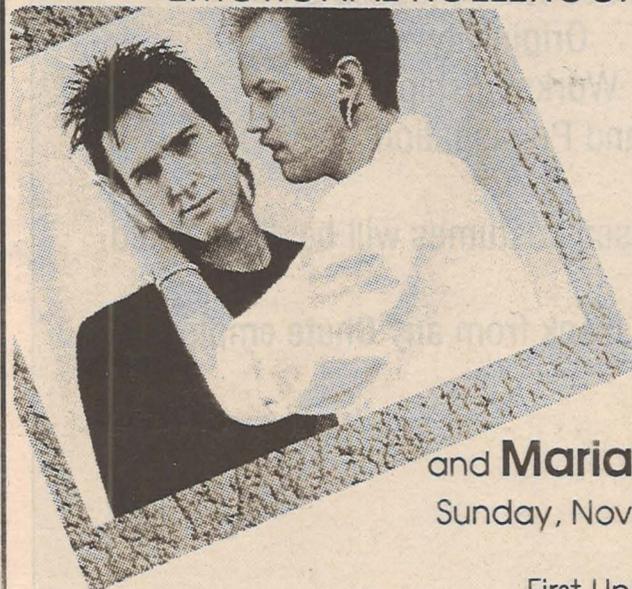
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Screens

Accused Convicted

By CAROLE CUNNINGHAM
Contributing Writer

Stanley R. Jaffe and Sherry Lansing have teamed up for what promises to be a short of *apologia* to women for their *Fatal Attraction*: woman as witch-like victimizer of good family values is replaced by woman as victim of a barbarous crime of male violence, and, for the purposes of this story, of a justice system all too ready to protect the criminal at the expense of the victim.

But this time a woman, with the help of another woman, fights back, not with vigilante antics and double-barrelled shotguns, but with the very system whose inequities and injustices are at the heart of the rape problem.

With its controversial but compelling subject matter, its two stunning stars Kelly McGillis and Jodie Foster, and a premise that lends itself to the kind of reflective thinking all too rare in American movies, *The Accused* promises to be a success story as much for its message as for its ticket sales.

But *The Accused* makes promises it doesn't keep, and in doing so, not only dilutes the sense of complicity the audience—if the "message" is to be heard—must certainly feel in its witnessing of the rape, but worst of all, gives the audience a false sense of catharsis with an improbable ending that is damaging to the cause it tries to defend.

Director Jonathan Kaplan (*Over the Edge* and *Heart Like a Wheel*), while faltering in later scenes, makes the opening sequences of *The Accused* sensitive and realistic. Jodie Foster (*Bugsie Malone*, *Taxi Driver*) plays Sarah Tobias, the young woman raped at a local bar by three men while several witnesses not only stand by watching, but encourage the rapists in their crime. Kelly McGillis (*Top Gun*) plays Kathryn Murphy, an assistant district attorney assigned to the case who plea-bargains the first-degree rape charge to a lesser felony without consulting the crime's victim.

Sarah, it seems, will be her own worst enemy on the stand: an often audacious flirt, she was drinking and smoking pot the evening of the rape, and had even joked with a friend about taking home one of the men who would later rape her.

In a well-played, well-directed scene, Murphy sits in a glass-enclosed office with her colleagues bargaining for an acceptable plea like most of us would bargain for a good car deal: the fact that a woman has been raped, and that the charge they accept will make no mention of a sexual assault, are facts irrelevant to the sterile, businesslike job of keeping the wheels of justice turning.

The three men plead guilty to the lesser charge and receive reduced sentences. Attorney Murphy feels she has done her job by putting the men behind bars—that is, until Foster's gutsy Sarah bursts into a quiet dinner at the Murphy home to tell her that justice has not been done, that the crime the men committed has been effectively erased, and her victimization forgotten. Moreover, Sarah accuses Kathryn of breaking her trust.

Slapped back to reality, the attorney tries to find a way to set things right, namely, by trying

to convict the witnesses of the rape who encouraged its commission. Sarah will get her day in court after all and a chance to tell her story.

As the witnesses are rounded up and the courtroom drama begins to unfold, a relationship of increasing mutual respect develops between client and lawyer. The chemistry between McGillis and Foster at times is as intriguing (or more so) as the plot itself, and by the latter half of the movie, may be one of its few redeeming features.

Because by the second half of *The Accused*, the rape is no longer the fact from which the plot emerges, or characters develop, but the very event all other events proceed toward: the actual enactment of the gang rape is the most prolonged, detailed scene in *The Accused*. Longer than the scene of fraternity boys cheering on their soon-to-be-convicted friend as they watch reports of the rape on TV; longer than the agonizing detail of Sarah's physical exam after the rape; longer than the emotional aftermath of Sarah's return home to her lover.

Once the multiple rapes have unfolded before our eyes, *The Accused* proceeds at a hell-bent pace toward its sunny resolution (and I give nothing away by revealing its all-too-obvious ending): the three men on trial for cheering the rapists on are summarily convicted. The music swells, the victim cheers, the lawyer breathes a sigh of relief that justice has now been done. McGillis and Foster's cheery smiles would not leave us surprised if they kissed and eloped before the run of the credits.

But the collective sigh of relief and approval from the audience hasn't been earned, it's been bought: at the expense of the sad reality of most rape cases in which observers both passive and active leave the crime exonerated, and usually with the perpetrator of the crime in tow. The false sense of satisfaction and justice the film gives its audience after letting it witness in detail a brutal attack is as cheap as it is seductive.

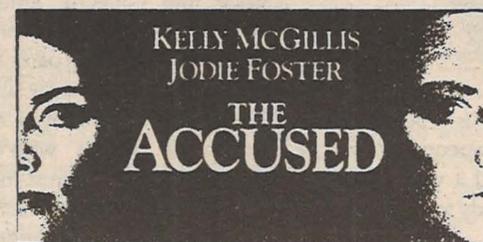
The audience's role as voyeur, as com-

plicitous in its observation of the crime as those on the screen, is left unexamined: any collective guilt we might feel for having watched, for having awaited, anticipated this dark scene is swept away by the cheery actors and the "just" end.

Those who watch *The Accused* must decide for themselves whether they have been entertained or exploited, and more importantly, whether the crime of rape and its victims have become fodder for titillating an at-first unsuspecting audience. Many will feel this exploitation overshadows the brilliant performance of Jodie Foster and the adequate performance of McGillis.

Still others will respect the film for taking some chances with a difficult subject, and certainly raising the subject to a more sophisticated plane than did *Walking Tall* or *Billy Jack*.

But if you had your suspicions about the intentions of *Fatal Attraction* and if you don't want a quick moral fix after watching an agonizingly painful crime, the verdict on *The Accused* is thumbs down. •



Pages

Scary Story

Scary Kisses, by Brad Gooch. New York: Putnam's, 1988.

By **JOE MAROHL**
Staff Writer

We live in end times. Never mind that Jesus Christ stood up 50,000 or so Christians last Rosh Hashanah. The important thing is, just look at all the new American writing. A sense of apocalypse pervades.

And the trumpet sounded and twin angels fell from heaven and touched the earth. And they opened two great abysses, and the first abyss was called *Bright Lights, Big City*, and the second abyss was called *Less Than Zero*.

And out of these abysses there issued forth smoke and fire and nouveau prose. And behold, three images in the shape of mortal men arose: the young upscale Faust type selling his soul for thrills, his soulless Marguerite, and a coked-up, usually blond Mephistopheles who draws the hero into the pit of hell. And a voice from heaven said, The Faust-Mephistopheles relationship is definitely the more interesting but really they probably ought not to fuck each other.

In the years since *Less than Zero*, a number of books by lesser talents have attempted various versions of the new-wave Faust. The point seems to be that we live in dismal times, and the young

people are going to hell in silver spoons. The chief interest these books hold is the sort of magazine decadence they celebrate, while most piously pretending to decry the fast lane they glamorize.

The threesomes at the novels' centers are almost always ambiguously bisexual (of course), though usually homosexuality proper is portrayed as perverse, or not really portrayed at all. Sometimes, as in Helen Eisenbach's *Loonglow*, the formula is seriously messed with and we have, say, two women and one man (i.e., Mephistopheles gets tits).

Enter Brad Gooch's first novel, *Scary Kisses*, a novel about male fashion models set in New York, Milan and Paris. Read this excerpt from the front flap and tell me what you think: "Todd - vulnerable, drifting, open to possibilities - wandering into modeling, then into the fast track, then into trouble. And Lucy - the girl next door, eighties-style - screwy, quirky, promiscuous but mad for Todd. And Frank - the blond supermodel who pulls them both into his cynical net of nihilism and sexual perversity."

Okay then.

Gooch, a former fashion model himself who also holds a Ph.D. in literature, is a contributor to *Vanity Fair* and *GQ*. His story in the last *Christopher Street* fiction anthology was easily the best of the whole lot. He is now at work on a biography of the late gay poet Frank O'Hara. Now, his first novel is an engrossing albeit

formula tale of modern decadence. Like *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh* earlier this year, it demonstrates educated intelligence and a willingness to play with the formula it more or less adheres to, setting it apart from the clones.

For instance, Todd and Lucy do not have far to fall into depravity, if indeed they fall at all. Before encountering the devil in the godlike form of Frank, Lucy is a self-described "feminist drug dealer" who buys from and sells to women only. Todd, we are told, used to watch snuff movies in high school. In fact, once the ball starts rolling, Frank can barely keep up with the newly-enrolled damned (You know what they say about converts).

To what perverse abyss, then, can Frank possibly bring these two Fausts who evidently have been around the block already? The answer (homosexuality) is a troubling one, especially since we have here a gay-identified writer and a gay-identified reader, neither of which (I assume) finds homosexuality all that much more perverse than, say, pushing drugs or watching the actual slaying of women on film.

Somewhere halfway through the last half of the book, two of the characters (guess which two) begin to wise up and start looking for salvation. One looks for it in religion and psychotherapy, and one looks for it in a revamped version of the traditional family. They find salvation and the sell-out to convention is only partial, definite subversive elements being part of the redemptive family.

Scary Kisses is a gay novel in which none of the characters is gay. They are, however, not exactly straight either. That is, they go to bed (sort of) with people of either sex, but they are really only fucking themselves. Stopping at the threshold of homosexuality, they preserve themselves from outright heterosexuality, too. It is the same sort of ambiguous quasi-gay sensibility that informs Paul Rudnick's hilarious comedy-of-downtown-manners novel of a few years ago, *Social Disease* - only here it's gone a little serious. It is intriguing, then, if for no other reason than that its eroticism (such as it is) is unclassifiable.

Gooch throws in cameo appearances by popular real-life models (Jeff Aquilon, Rick Edwards and Michael Ives, among others) to authenticate his milieu. And the book effectively demythologizes the world of male modeling; I no longer want to be a model, having also recently given up my desire to be a child actor. And, though hardly the kind of debut I would have wished for him, the book makes a damned good case for Gooch's skills in storytelling. But, for all its end-of-the-world angst, I cannot take *Scary Kisses* seriously. It's a good fast rush. The novelistic equivalent of poppers. •

"Todd - vulnerable, drifting, open to possibilities - wandering into modeling, then into the fast track, then into trouble. And Lucy - the girl next door, eighties-style - screwy, quirky, promiscuous but mad for Todd. And Frank - the blond supermodel who pulls them both into his cynical net of nihilism and sexual perversity."
Okay then.

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The Lesbian and Gay Newspaper
From the Heart of the American South

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Views

Archaic. And They Mean It.

The Tennessee Sentencing Commission has recently reported its findings to the state legislature, and they are not pretty.

Charged with the responsibility of revising the criminal code with the end view of removing "archaic language," the Commission has made a number of grievous errors that we hope will doom its proposed language to the ash-heap of repressive legislation.

In a cynically political move, the Commission ignored the more enlightened voices of some of its own members and chose to pander to bigotry and homophobia, as well as AIDS hysteria, by recommending changing Tennessee's laughably outmoded "crimes-against-nature" law to something much more sinister: direct prohibition against same-sex sex acts.

That direct prohibition wouldn't be so bad, except that it unfortunately might have some teeth to it. The crimes-against-nature statute now in force applies felony penalties. If those penalties remain and the language changes to directly apply to homosexual acts, the consequences could be grim.

It doesn't take much of a stretch of the imagination to see the possibilities. Politically-ambitious prosecutors and law-enforcement officials using the tool such a law would give them to harass and abuse

the civil rights of lesbians and gay men. Queerbashing witchhunts. Innocent men and women imprisoned for loving in the way natural for them.

Now, those of us in the major metropolitan areas are probably safe, no matter what the law says, at least until local elections approach and opportunistic politicians use everything at their disposal to prove how "Christian" and "family-oriented" they are.

But what about those who don't have the relative safety of numbers? What about those in rural areas and small towns?

Part of the reason the Commission was assigned to report on possible changes to the code was the severe, some would argue unconstitutional, overcrowding of Tennessee's prisons. Updating the code, it was thought, might make it easier to use alternate sentencing and punishments to ease the strain on state prisons.

What the Commission has done, however, is propose relaxing requirements for imprisonment of some offenders, while avoiding a true modernization of the law.

It all comes down to this: the criminalization of homosexual acts is the very opposite of modernization. It is regression. •

Rollin' on the River

This issue marks our arrival in Memphis. We're glad to be here, and we hope you'll come to look forward to getting the latest copy of *Dare*.

When we started publishing nearly eight months ago, we made some promises – promises that we think we've been able to keep.

First of all, a word of explanation.

Dare is a weekly newspaper for the lesbian and gay community. The name comes from Oscar Wilde's famous reference to "the love that dare not speak its name," with a twist. Well, we do *Dare*.

Now for the promises.

We promise to report local and state news as objectively and accu-

ately as possible, and to help keep our readers abreast of national and international developments that affect them.

We promise to bring features and reviews about the books, films, plays, events, and, of course, the people important to our community.

We promise to present our opinions in editorials only – not in news stories. At the same time, we welcome other opinions about the issues that concern the community, especially if they're different from ours.

We hope you'll enjoy reading *Dare*. Let us know what you or your group is up to, so that we can share it with our other readers around Tennessee and the rest of the country. •

Soapbox

Ad-ucation

By ANN TAYLOR

Dare Advertising Sales Coordinator

Needed: Reliable person to sell ads and make rain. Phone 292-9623.

When I saw the ad in *Dare*'s classified section, I thought "Now, there's a way to earn some money. It'll be flexible and part-time and I can keep doing my thing." My "thing" at that time was a master's thesis at MTSU. Well, that's still ONE of my things, but it's taking a back burner to activism and professional queerness.

Making calls for ads has been, well, interesting. There are some folks out there who have seen our paper and a lot who haven't – yet.

Some who won't be civil – may I use the word "christian"? They do – on the phone and many who want to know more – a lot more.

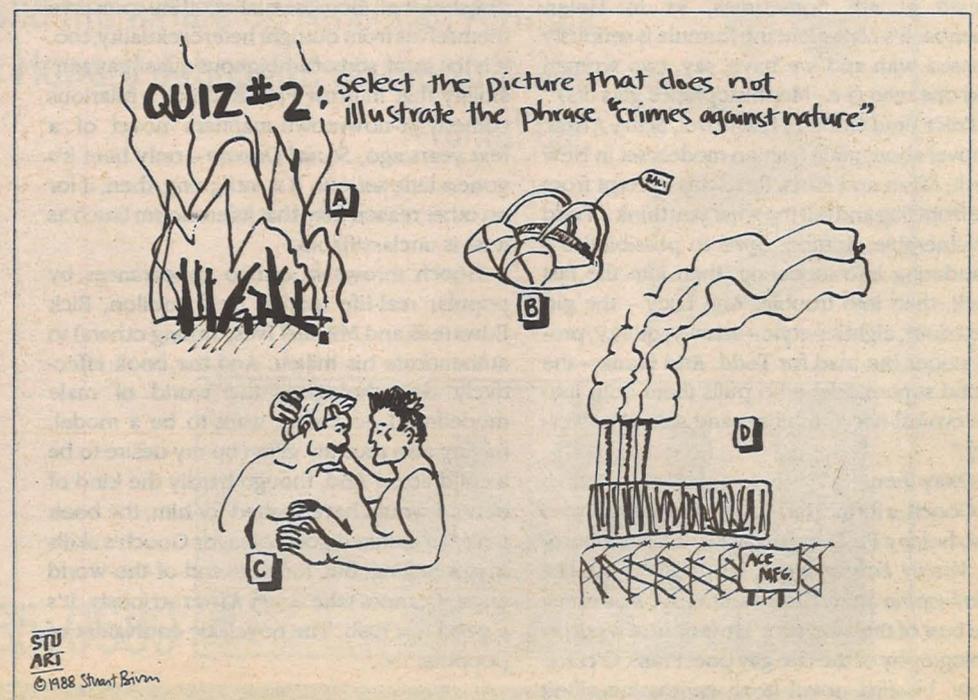
Offering ad space in *Dare* has become, for me, a way of educating the public at large about the gay and lesbian community in Nashville. This kind of outreach replaces myth with facts. We don't hang out in dark alleys wearing rain coats regardless of the weather and we don't try to seduce or molest every warm body that crosses our path.

Rather, that we're at least 50,000 strong in Nashville; that we work, pay our bills, read books, go to movies, dance; that we're diverse and creative, proud and vibrant. That we feel joy and pain. That we are human beings. That

more and more "traditional" businesses are taking space in the paper indicates their recognition of a politically and economically vital community. In a world where we all too often face the "[George] Armistead mentality" it's encouraging to encounter non-gays who are not only accepting of our lifestyle but wish to

court us – so to speak.

Now I don't want to tell you where to hang out or shop, but remember that the folks that you see advertising in this paper allow us to come back week after week. So if you just happen to drop in, you might let them know we appreciate their support. •



One in Teen

Getting the Word Out

The author is a seventeen-year-old high school student. Because he is a minor, he will use a pseudonym.

By **PATRICK HILLS**
Contributing Writer

My plea for letters has finally begun to work! After weeks of no mail, I finally got some. While this column and the ad in *Dare* have been beneficial in letting teens know about this group, I have decided that it is not enough.

Only a very small percentage of teenagers read *Dare*. The majority of lesbian and gay teens probably have never heard of *Dare*. However, teen publications would reach my target group much more effectively. One such publication is *The Student Informer* which is a teen paper published by the Nashville Youth Network. I have already made arrangements

for an advertisement for my group in the next issue of their paper.

While I think I will get some responses from this, I feel I need to hit the best publication for teens: school newspapers. Since I go to Hillsboro [High School in Nashville] and know someone on the paper staff, I decided to attempt to put an ad in my school newspaper. How's that for controversy?

My reasoning is that anywhere from 600 to 1200 students might read my ad. I believe that would have brought quite a few people to the group. I presented the idea to my friend on the Hillsboro paper staff, and she was all for it. Other people on the staff were in favor of running the ad, but worried about possible reaction from students, and especially parents.

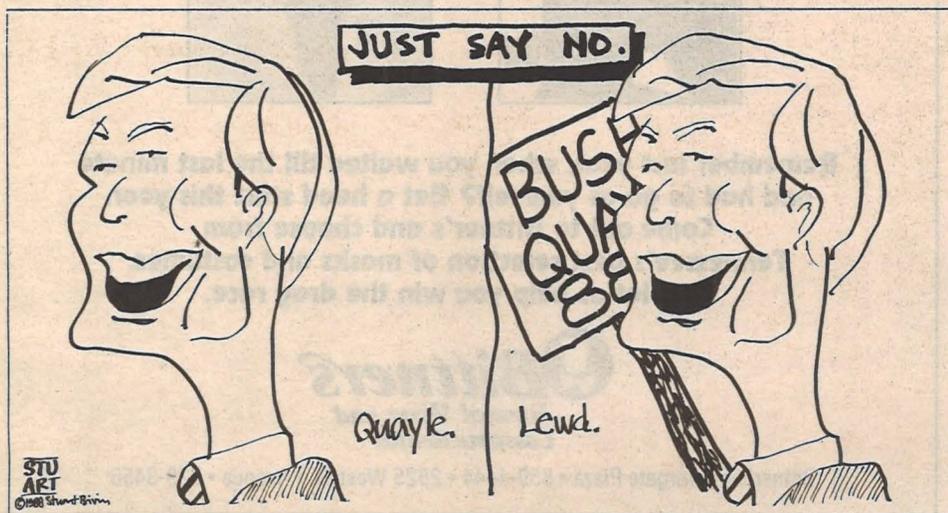
In the end, my ad was rejected due to the controversy involved. This decision really upset me because it would have given a message that Hillsboro is a liberal school. It would have set a very good precedent about a school paper's freedom of the press.

But I guess I need to remember that we live in the buckle of the bible belt. And all those Southern Baptist parents would truly freak and say, "What kind of school is my child going to?"

Meanwhile their child is memorizing the address and thinking, "Thank God! A chance to meet other teens like me!" Oh well. Maybe Hillsboro is not ready to accept something like this. After all, the parents would probably form a coalition and have people watch the post office 24 hours a day to find out what horrid teenager is trying to turn their child into one of "those" people!

But I have not given up that easy. My friend has suggested I write a letter to the editor regarding the fact that my ad was refused even though the school paper is in desperate need of money. I also plan to put flyers up in different locations. I, for a short period, toyed with the idea of putting my ad in a local newspaper, but quickly realized that the post office is too small to hold all the "concerned" Nashvillians who would be diligently waiting my arrival in front of that little door marked #158002.

If any of you out there have any ideas of ways to let more teenagers hear about this group, drop me a note at Box 158002, Nashville, TN, 37215-8002. •



Soapbox

A Clear Choice

By **CHRISTINE R. RIDDIOUGH**

Executive Director, Gay and Lesbian Democrats of America

Special to *Dare*

On November 8, millions of gay men and lesbians will have a choice. That choice is clear: we must elect Mike Dukakis the next president of the United States. Mike Dukakis is the best candidate gay men and lesbians have ever had.

This election is the most important election our community has ever faced - it is a choice: better lives for the millions of gay men and lesbians in the United States or years of stagnation and defeat.

This summer GLDA endorsed Mike Dukakis for president. We made that endorsement because the records of the two candidates are clear. Mike Dukakis supports gay and lesbian rights and more effective programs and policy on AIDS; George Bush opposes gay and lesbian rights and has participated in the malign neglect of AIDS of the Reagan-Bush administration.

Michael Dukakis has said, "Every American should have the opportunity to live his or her life fully and openly - and to contribute and participate in the life of our country - without fear or intimidation. Our civil rights laws acknowledge that discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, national origin or disability is fundamentally unfair. Discrimination against an individual because of his or her sexual orientation is no less unfair...That is

why, as President, I will fight for federal legislation to add a prohibition against discrimination based on sexual orientation." Meanwhile George Bush says, "We do not believe in codification of laws relating to homosexuals," and "I don't think American society should be asked to accept that homosexuality is a standard which should be held up for acceptance."

The Reagan-Bush Supreme Court has, in *Hardwick v. Bowers*, denied the privacy rights of gay and lesbian people.

The next president of the United States will appoint at least three new justices and shape the court well into the next century. George Bush will appoint people like Robert Bork and Edwin Meese; Mike Dukakis will appoint people like Thurgood Marshall and William Brennan.

The choice is clear.

Mike Dukakis recognizes that AIDS is a public health crisis and says, "AIDS is the most serious threat to the public health we have faced in our lifetime. It must be conquered...As President, I will provide leadership to meet this crisis. I will commit the resources necessary to prevent the spread of the virus, find a cure, develop a vaccine, and care for people with AIDS and ARC. We will have a national strategic plan to guide us in the war on AIDS and we will have a President leading the charge."

In contrast, George Bush says, "Ultimately we must protect those who do not have the disease. Thus we have made the decision that there must be more testing." More than 40,000

people have died from AIDS in the United States during the eight years of Reagan-Bush inaction.

The choice is clear.

Mike Dukakis supports efforts to eliminate discrimination against gay men and lesbians in immigration laws. He believes that violence against gay men and lesbians should be treated as a civil rights violation. George Bush supports neither.

The choice is clear.

The Democratic Party supports an end to discrimination against gay men and lesbians while Republicans fail to speak out. Almost 100 openly gay men and lesbians were delegates to the Democratic National Convention in 1988. No openly gay men or lesbians were Republican delegates. Four openly gay people are members of the Democratic National Committee, none are members of the Republican National Committee. The Dukakis campaign has three openly gay staff people at the national level; the Bush campaign has no openly gay staff people.

The choice is clear.

Four more years of Bush-Quayle, like the eight years of Reagan-Bush, will doom hundreds of thousands of people in our community to illness, death, loss of jobs and homes. We cannot sit out the election on November 8 - we must vote and when we vote we must remember that we are deciding our fate and those of millions of others.

We must vote for Mike Dukakis. •

**Vote.
It's
the
least
you
can
do.**

**On Tuesday,
November 8,
America
will choose
your future.
Be there.**

