

Dare

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THE LESBIAN AND GAY NEWSPAPER

MARCH 23-29, 1988

Locals Zap Dannemeyer

Protestors Interrupt AIDS Commission Testimony

By STUART BIVIN

Six gay and lesbian AIDS activists interrupted the testimony of homophobic Rep. William Dannemeyer (R.-Calif.) before the President's AIDS Commission here Thursday.

The group marched into the hearings holding hands and chanting "We're not going to tolerate your stupidity."

The six were part of a larger group of some 20 protesting Dannemeyer's testimony. The group picketed outside the Stadium Club at Vanderbilt University where the Commission's hearings were held at the invitation of Colleen Conway Welch, dean of the Nursing School and a member of the panel.

The protest, organized by a coalition of local AIDS and gay-rights groups, sought to divert attention from Dannemeyer's support for mandatory HIV testing and the reporting of seropositivity. Dannemeyer's attacks on privacy rights and gay rights also drew criticism from the protesters.

Following the hearing's interruption by the six protesters, the meeting was immediately recessed. Security officers were

asked to escort the six from the room. The group then left without incident.

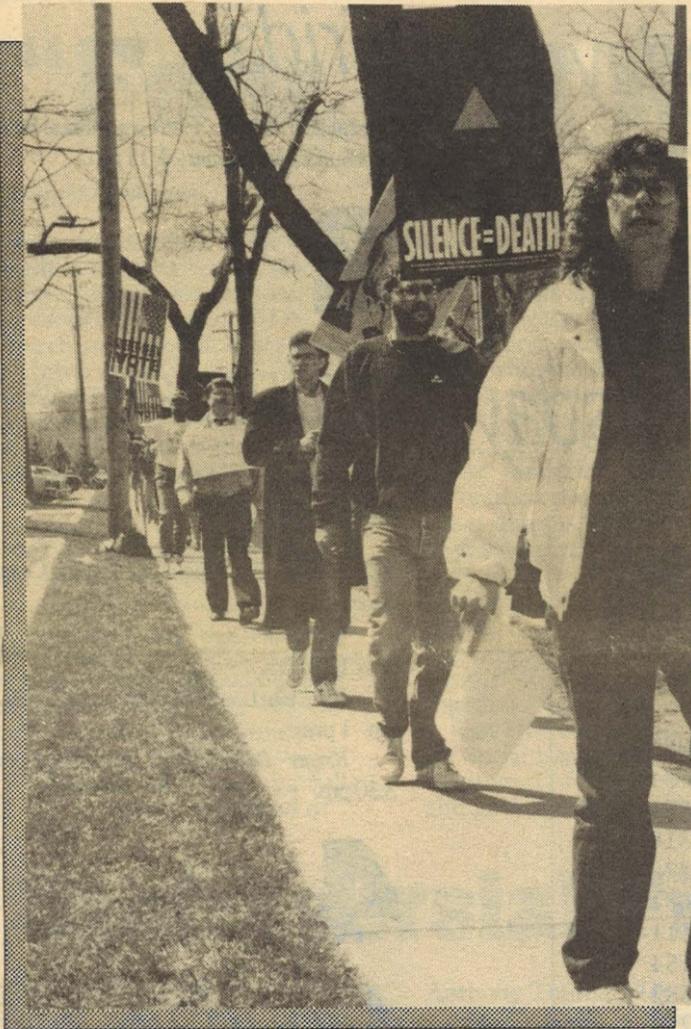
Gerry Scoppetuolo, a founding member of LASER (Legislation for AIDS Services, Education and Resources), and a participant in the action, said the protest was only the beginning of "militant organizing to bring local attention to the criminal lack of action by the state of Tennessee on AIDS issues."

Scoppetuolo added that a chapter of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) is forming in Nashville. The group will organize more visible actions to prod the state into both increased funding for AIDS services and education, and the restoration of protection for AIDS sufferers under the state's handicapped job discrimination law.

Sunday's *Tennessean* reported that Gov. Ned McWherter is supportive of changes in that law to ensure that persons with AIDS do not become victims of discrimination. Scoppetuolo reiterated that claim.

However, according to Scoppetuolo, the state has done nothing to help in the fight against AIDS.

"The emperor has no clothes," he said. "We think it's time for someone to say he's naked."



Protestors picketing outside the Vanderbilt Stadium Club Thursday objected to the testimony of U.S. Representative William Dannemeyer (R.-Cal.) before the President's AIDS Commission.

AIDS Commission Meets in Nashville

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Hatred and discrimination against people with AIDS was the recurring theme last week as members of the President's AIDS Commission heard testimony in meetings on the Vanderbilt campus.

Norma Mowery, of Lake City, recounted her family's turmoils which began last fall when her son's condition was disclosed by school officials there. Twelve-year-old Dewayne Mowery, a hemophiliac, was infected with the virus through contaminated blood products.

"We worry all the time about Dewayne," she said. "He does not like school anymore. He has no chance to make friends. One of the reasons you go to school is to make friends."

Her son now attends the Anderson County Gifted Center four days a week, alone in a classroom designed for thirty or more children. Dewayne, who has a learning disability, had been attending a school for the handicapped, which has since closed.

"In order to get an education for

my child, I had to give information to the school," Mowery testified, her son looking on. "But giving out that information destroyed our privacy."

She called to task those Anderson County school officials who discussed her son's condition with reporters without her permission, and told of people driving by the Mowery home with signs saying, "Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!"

Mowery's testimony came during the first day of the hearings which also included Ben Schatz of National Gay Rights Advocates, based in San Francisco, and Abby Rubinfeld, legal director of Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund in New York City. In addition, an AIDS patient who lost his health insurance, and a woman whose brother was virtually neglected by hospital personnel during his last days, also offered testimony.

"We had to bathe him, change his bed linens and feed him," she told the panel. "They (the hospital personnel) wouldn't even come near him."

Thursday's testimony was the target

of protests by a group of local gay and lesbian activists who were objecting to the appearance of conservative California congressman William Dannemeyer.

Rep. Dannemeyer asked the commission to recommend to President Reagan that anyone who is infected with the AIDS virus be reported to public health officials. Further, Dannemeyer suggested that anyone with the virus or who is openly gay should be exempt from any federal anti-discrimination protection.

In other testimony Thursday, Dr. Lorraine Day, chief of orthopedic surgery at San Francisco General Hospital, told the commission that all hospital patients should be tested for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Several members of the commission apparently supported Day's recommendation. Day said that in her career she has probably operated on as many AIDS patients as anyone in the country. She has been at the San Francisco hospital for 15 years.

Because orthopedic surgery

requires hours of drilling and sawing on bones, persons in the operating room are many times covered in blood. Thus, Day said, it is important they be aware if they are indeed dealing with someone with the HIV virus.

SEE AIDS COMMISSION ON PAGE 3

INSIDE

News
Reviews
Opinion
Letters
Directory
Calendar

Calendar

March

23

Wednesday

Vanderbilt Women's Faculty Organization
*Sexual Harassment: Discrimination in
Dignity*, Sarratt 118. Noon.

Nashville CARES Bachelor's Bid Auction
and Raffle, Warehouse 28.

24

Thursday

Vanderbilt Women's Week *The
Religious Self and the Sexual Self* Workshop,

Planned Parenthood Center, 112 21st Av
South. 7 pm. General public \$15, students
free. Register by phone: 327-1097.

25

Friday

Vanderbilt Lambda Association Karen
Thompson Lecture, 114 Furman Hall. 7 pm.

Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-
GALA) Karen Thompson Reception, 114
Furman Hall. 8 pm.

Nashville CARES Benefit Show, Juanita's.

26

Saturday

Nashville CARES Benefit Show, The
Jungle.

27

Sunday

Nashville CARES Writer's Night, Bluebird
Café.

29

Tuesday

Vanderbilt Lambda Association Share
Meeting. 5:30 pm.

30

Wednesday

Sarratt Center Cinema *My Life as a Dog*,
film, Sarratt Student Center, Vanderbilt. 7:30
pm and 9:30 pm.

Nashville CARES Benefit Show, Victor/
Victoria's.

April

1

Friday

Nashville CARES *Cats* Cast Musical Revue
and Buffet, Warehouse 28. 11 pm.

2

Saturday

Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Task Force
Meeting, Memphis. 1 pm.

U.S. Rep. Bob Clement (D-Tenn.) Open
Meetings:

Bethlehem Center, 1417 Charlotte Av. 9
am - 10:30 am.

100 Oaks, Lower Mall Entrance. 11:30
am - 1 pm.

Kroger - Bellevue, 7087 Hwy 70S. 2 pm -
3:30 pm.

4

Monday

Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-
GALA) General Meeting, Towne House
Tea Room. 7 pm.

14-17

Thursday -

Sunday

Southeastern Conference for Lesbians and
Gay Men Conference, Pierremont Plaza
Convention Center, Atlanta.

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World's End	1713 Church St	329-3480

ORGANIZATIONS

American Civil Liberties Union	Hedy Weinberg, <i>Director</i> Box 120160, Nashville 37212	256-7028
Conductors	Box 40261, Nashville 37204	
Nashville CARES	Sandee Potter, <i>Director</i> Box 25107, Nashville, 37202	385-1510
	AIDS Crisis Line	385-AIDS
Nashville Women's Alliance	Box 120834, Nashville 37212	
National Organization for Women (Tennessee)	Elizabeth Jameson, <i>President</i> Box 120523, Nashville 37212	
Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA)	Box 24181, Nashville 37202	
Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Task Force (TGLTF)	Carole Cunningham, <i>President</i> Box 24181, Nashville 37202	
Vanderbilt Lambda Association	Box 121743, Nashville 37212	
Women's Resource Center (YWCA)	1608 Woodmont Blvd	385-3952

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AIDS Commission Meets in Nashville

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Metro health director Dr. Fredia Wadley presented a proposal at the Friday hearing which would require that all Tennesseans suffering from AIDS would be reported to state officials.

Wadley said that those infected would be reported, but not by name or address, under the proposal. Also testifying was state Environment Commissioner James Word.

"The commissioner and I believe," Wadley said, "that even with improved confidentiality laws, the possibility of breaching that confiden-

tiality is present."

However, despite her fears, Wadley still supports mandatory reporting "after reasonable efforts to protect the person's confidentiality" are made.

State officials argue that mandatory reporting is necessary to help them to more accurately determine the number of Tennesseans suffering from AIDS. Presently, health officials can only estimate that number.

Since 1982, approximately 390 Tennesseans have been diagnosed as having the disease and more than 12,000 others are believed to be infected with the virus.



Members of the President's A(IDS Commission hear the testimony of homophobic U.S. Rep. William Dannemeyer (R - Cal.) during their Nashville hearings last week at the Vanderbilt Stadium Club.

"Fear, not AIDS, is in the Air"

By CAROLE CUNNINGHAM

"Fear, not AIDS, is in the air," according to Francisco Sy, associate professor of epidemiology and director of the Carolina AIDS Research and Education Project at the University of South Carolina School of Public Health.

Sy's comments were made at a forum held as part of the Vanderbilt AIDS Project's "AIDS Education Week" in early February. The week's events attracted international experts on AIDS, local health officials and audiences in the hundreds.

Sy, president of the International Society for AIDS Education, called for increased public education about the spread of HIV, reporting that there are now more than 75,000 cases of AIDS in 130 countries worldwide.

While condoms are only partially effective in stalling the spread of

AIDS, Sy explained that they are still the best method available. Sy called for increased voluntary testing in order to document for research purposes the spread of the disease, and for laws prohibiting discrimination against people with AIDS and those who test HIV-positive.

In the forum, "AIDS: A Problem Requiring Requiring Everyone's Response," A. Gene Copello, director of the Vanderbilt AIDS Project and an assistant professor of medical ethics, discussed the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) to all areas of the world. Held February 4, the forum drew the week's largest crowd.

Worldwide spread of the AIDS virus is "forcing all of us to work together," according to Copello.

Jean Hutton, director of the Center for Social Exploration, Grubbs Institute, London, urged societies and governments worldwide to

explore innovative ways to combat the spread of AIDS at the community level.

Hutton described the complex issues faced when trying to use old methods to address new challenges: "There is a danger in using pre-AIDS thinking and tools to do a job that demands a shift" in "Cartesian" thinking. The AIDS Epidemic cannot be treated in a "me vs. not me" fashion, according to Hutton.

"AIDS should not and cannot be viewed as a disease of the individual," Hutton said.

Because everyone in the world lives in a world with AIDS, "education must begin inside of each of us."

Hutton criticized both efforts to stigmatize those infected with the AIDS virus and attempts to reduce individual rights in the name of society's interests. She said that intolerance and fear have created environments worldwide in which

"there is increasing pressure to take away individuals' responsibility at a time when we most expect individuals to be responsible for their behavior."

The AIDS crisis demands social cohesion and cooperation rather than isolation and divisiveness, Hutton said.

Fredia Wadley, Metro Medical Director, called "good news" the fact that AIDS still seems to be primarily affecting gay men and intravenous drug users.

Wadley said her department has asked the legislature to include \$300,000 in the state budget for AIDS education, testing and counseling. Wadley said that the state would need to allocate six or seven times the figure her department has requested in order to effectively fight the AIDS virus in Tennessee. More than 200 Tennesseans have died from AIDS since 1982.

Controversial Film Premieres Thursday

The Nashville premiere of *Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will be Done*, the controversial documentary exploring the marriage of Christian fundamentalism to the political right, will be Thursday night at Vanderbilt's Sarratt Cinema at 7:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the Vanderbilt Religious Ministries Group, the University Chaplain and the Sarratt Film Committee, the film will be followed by a question and answer session.

Written, produced and directed by

Anthony Thomas, *Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will be Done* is a co-production of England's Central Television Network and PBS' "Frontline."

Originally scheduled to air on "Frontline" last May, the film was pulled from the schedule when PBS claimed it was "unsuitable" for airing. The original air date came two months after the resignation of Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker from the PTL ministries, which provides much of the focus for part one of the film.

The second half of the documentary is devoted to a look at the ever-widening gulf between the rich and the poor in Dallas and in particular the huge 26,000-member First Baptist Church under its pastor Dr.

W.A. Criswell.

There are also references to well-known televangelists Jimmy Swaggart and Jerry Falwell.

Admission to the film is \$2.50.

Activist Dems Clear First Hurdle

Several gay and lesbian activists Saturday cleared the first hurdle in becoming delegates to the Democratic National Convention.

Deborah Burks, a candidate for a Jesse Jackson delegate spot, and Jeff Ellis, running for a spot on Tennessee Senator Al Gore's slate of delegates, both won seats in caucuses held Saturday during the Davidson County Democratic Party convention. Both Burks and Ellis will now go on to this Saturday's district convention to be held at the Legislative Plaza.

"It was a good experience, politically," Burks said. "I feel like I learned a lot about the system."

Burks further noted the support from other gay and lesbian activists at the Jackson caucus. Seven others were selected to attend the fifth district convention as Jackson voters.

"I think we were able to show some political muscle," Ellis said. "And were able to do some important coalition-building at the convention that may pay off for us in the future."

During the Super Tuesday primary, Gore won five delegate seats in the fifth congressional district, with Jackson pocketing one of the delegate positions. National party rules mandate that delegations represent gender parity and guarantee minority participation.

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Curtains

Top Girls Runs Through April 2 at Actors' Playhouse

By SHERRIE DRYDEN

"One thing about Caryl Churchill, you are never bored." Hardly anyone will disagree with John Russell Taylor's response to Churchill's play *Top Girls*. What they do disagree about is what the play means and, more specifically, how the fantasy of the first scene relates to the naturalistic events of the remainder of the play.

Churchill, a radical socialist-feminist, is often referred to as Britain's leading woman dramatist. Critics praise her wit and inventiveness; her work is characterized by theatrical devices like multiple casting, overlapping dialogue, cross-sex role-playing and the suspension of actual time, place and action. *Top Girls*, first produced in 1982, begins with a scene that forces the audience to suspend all expectations.

The play begins at the Prima Donna restaurant, with a party celebrating the protagonist Marlene's promotion to managing director of the *Top Girls* employment agency. Joining her are five women of distinction taken from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. The ghost characters include both real and mythical women. Each woman tells her life story and each reveals herself to be a woman of complex achievements, successes and regrets. The

women playing the ghost characters and the waitress appear in later scenes as Marlene's sister, daughter, co-workers and clients.

Following the dinner party, we see Marlene at work, the other women in her office chatting to each other and interviewing clients, and the intervention into Marlene's professional life of her slow-witted daughter Angie, who has been brought up by Marlene's sister Joyce. The story, but not the play, ends here, with Angie arriving out of the blue and Marlene predicting, "She's not going to make it."

The final scene in the play, an intense, emotional scene between Marlene and her sister Joyce, who has remained at the family home and lived in poverty while rearing Angie, occurs one year before the dinner party.

Marlene sees herself as an "original," an independent, self-made woman in the image of Margaret Thatcher. She rejects her working-class parents, recoils at the mention of blood and gynecology, and blindly accepts that her womanhood (in the form of her child and family) is an acceptable sacrifice to make for success.

The dinner party scene is most easily interpreted as an announcement of the play's message as a search for the ties that bind women across history. We immediately see the

parallels between the lives of the women from history, into whose number Marlene is being inducted. In some way each has attained success, but only by making concessions to a patriarchal system.

We may agree with Marlene, as does director Dorothy Marie Robinson does, that these concessions are necessary because "we're forced to function in a set economic way." What we eventually realize is that feminism - Marlene's brand of bourgeois feminism - is not enough.

Churchill uses the familiar myth of the career woman as castrating female to make us think *Top Girls* questions a feminism that produces women who is essence become female men. In the end, the dramatic conflict in *Top Girls* arises not out of a battle of the sexes but out of class struggle as it persists through many generations.

Because we see that Marlene rejects the things about herself that are most closely identified with being a woman, we are tempted to believe that she has become the oppressor by forsaking her sisters in her struggle to achieve. But Churchill does not allow us to forget that Marlene is a woman. Marlene has indeed become the oppressor, but she has forsaken her brothers as well.

Melissa Bedinger, Marlene in the Actor's Playhouse production, agrees, saying that "the sex issue is not the

main point. Marlene denies her class to succeed. The present social structure forces people to take an individual stance."

The dinner party scene, then, is essential. As Valerie Plommer, who plays Joyce and the Waitress, said, "If you pay attention to the first scene you understand the rest of the play - they explain each other."

Marlene and the Waitress are undeniably women. As director Robinson points out, "All of the women in the first scene are part of Marlene." Yet these women are more identified with the ideologies of their cultures than they are with women as a group.

Each has a separate story, an identifying costume, a way of speaking appropriate to her class. Each is able to see the intolerance of the others' cultures, yet blind to the inequities of her own. Even the overlapping dialogue serves to illustrate the lack of group identification. The apparently feminist orientation of the gathering is destroyed as we see that in their own ways each of the women succeeded by supporting the oppression under which they lived.

In the final scene Joyce says, "Nothing's changed for most people, has it?"

Looking at the "progression" of history through the lives of the dinner party women, we see it hasn't.

Screens

Forster and Clive and Maurice and Alec

By JEFF ELLIS

Maurice. JAMES IVORY, DIRECTOR. MERCHANT-IVORY PRODUCTIONS, 1987.
STARRING JAMES WILBY, HUGH GRANT, DENHOLM ELLIOTT, BEN KINGSLEY.

Not too very long ago in England, homosexuality was a crime punishable by imprisonment. It is against the backdrop of those treacherous times that *Maurice*, the latest film adaptation of an E.M. Forster work, is set.

Following the twin successes of *A Room With a View* and *A Passage to India*, the production team of James Ivory and Ismail Merchant chose a homosexual love story set in Edwardian England as their latest project.

And, as with their two previous offerings, the transfer of novel to film has indeed been a beautiful and perhaps miraculous effort. *Maurice* is wonderfully evocative and thoroughly erotic while managing to maintain its characters' dignity.

We first meet Maurice Hall at age fourteen, then follow him through public school and on to his undergraduate day at Cambridge. It is during his Cambridge days that Maurice (played here by James Wilby with restraint and just a hint of desperation) first comes face to face with the "unspeakable" in the person of charming young Clive Durham.

Clive (Hugh Grant in an affecting portrayal of lusty youth and stifled man) considers himself to be Maurice's better, both socially and intellectually, and is therefore quite astonished when Maurice calls his admission of love "rubbish."

But when Maurice fully considers Clive's important role in his life, he rushes to make things right and admits his love for Clive. The two then embark on a relationship filled with mutual trust and bonding that is nothing short of beautiful.

The notion of platonic, yet passion-

ate, love between two men is treated with thoughtfulness, both in the film and in the novel upon which it is based and is refreshing in comparison to other films of similar ilk.

It is the naturalness of this love and its presentation on film which makes *Maurice* the important work that it is. The relationship of the two men is presented in a very non-sensational, very straightforward manner virtually unheard of in films of wide release.

Certainly, as in real life, the course of true love does not run smooth, and when Clive returns from a trip to Greece, he tells Maurice of his change of heart and his determination to lead a "normal" life. Upon Clive's marriage to Anne Woods, Maurice is despondent and settles, in his own way, for a "normal" life.

But it is during a trip to Clive's estate that Maurice becomes infatuated with the young gamekeeper, Alec Scudder. This leads to intrigue and an eventual acceptance of himself and his lifestyle.

Scudder (played here by Rupert Graves, last seen as Freddy Honeychurch in *A Room With A View*) is a rough hewn commoner whom Maurice at first derisively thinks of as only a servant, echoing Clive's initial summary of Maurice.

However, it is finally Alec's almost animal sensuality which awakens Maurice's desires and signals the many changes in his outlook and in the way he lives.

As with other Merchant-Ivory films, *Maurice* is visually stunning. The strong visual images conjured up by the designers of the other films are just as potent in this one. The richness of tone, the skillful editing and thoughtful framing of scenes all combine to make *Maurice* the realization of a cinematographer's dream.

The Oscar-nominated costume

design is top-notch - possibly the year's best. Tchaikovsky's *Symphonic Pathétique* is an apropos choice for the basis of the lyrical and commanding score.

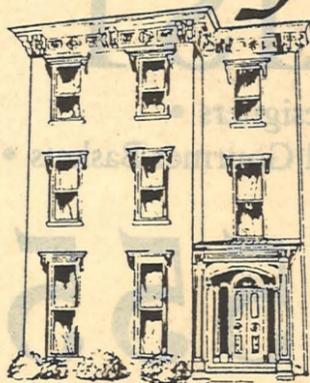
Supporting performances are exceptional. Denholm Elliott, as a family doctor *cum* surrogate father to Maurice, is once again quite effective. Oscar winner Ben Kingsley affects a wonderfully American accent in his role as a hypnotist seeking to "cure" Maurice. As Clive's mother, Judy Parfitt, most recently seen on American television in a situation comedy, proves why she is considered one of England's leading actresses. Also interesting is the appearance, albeit a brief one, of luminously lovely Helena Bonham Carter as a young

girl commenting on Alec's virility during a cricket match.

But the really exceptional thing about *Maurice* is the film's faithfulness to Forster's novel. Though written in 1913, the book was only published in 1971, under the terms of Forster's will.

Maurice's storyline was ahead of its time not only because of its then-taboo subject matter, but also because of its notion that true love can indeed exist between two men. At times it seems as if the screenplay is lifted directly from Forster's work, thus sparing us from seeing a movie made from a favorite book only to be disappointed by an unfaithful adaptation.

The Gas Lite



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Noon - 3 am Sunday

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Thompson at Women's Week Friday Why Can't Sharon Come Home?

Karen Thompson will be the featured speaker Friday as part of Vanderbilt University's Women's Week '88.

The 7:00 p.m. lecture will take place in room 114 of Furman Hall on the Vanderbilt campus and is sponsored by Vanderbilt Lambda Association.

Thompson, an assistant professor at St. Cloud (Minn.) State University, lived with Sharon Kowalski in a committed, loving relationship for four years. However, in 1983, when Kowalski was severely disabled as the

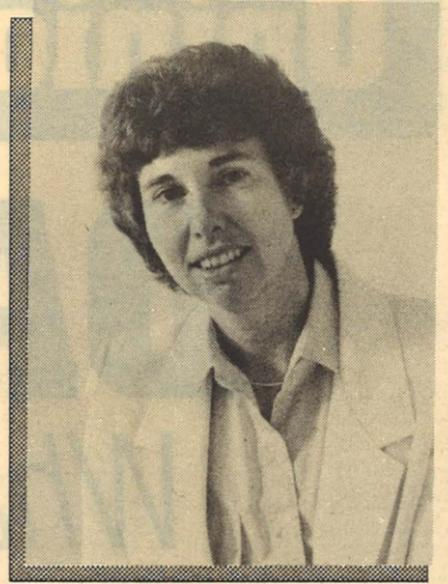
result of an automobile accident involving a drunk driver, their lives were seriously altered.

Thompson was forced to admit the nature of their relationship to Kowalski's unknowing parents who then took legal steps to prevent Thompson from playing any active role in their daughter's treatment.

Thompson entered into a protracted legal battle with the Kowalskis to protect her lover's right to recovery and to ensure their rights as a couple. In 1985, Kowalski's father was appointed her legal guardian.

Since then Thompson has been refused visitation rights and has been excluded from all discussions about Kowalski's care. Her presentation will focus on the guardianship case as an example of homophobia, sexism and handicap-ism which exist in the legal system today.

Contributions to the Karen Thompson legal fund will be accepted. Following Thompson's presentation, the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance will host a reception in her honor.



KAREN THOMPSON

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More locations soon!

Sex Sting Nabs Forty

More than thirty men were arrested earlier this month as the Davidson County grand jury handed down indictments in a sex-for-pay sting operation conducted by Metro sex abuse and vice squad detectives.

The indictments were the result of a two-month long undercover operation. The December and January sting took place after police

learned that 13-to-18-year-old males in the east Nashville area were selling sex to adult males.

Police report that six of the men indicted remain at large at press time. Further, police say that some of those arrested have provided information which may lead to other investigations into illegal sexual activities.

Vanderbilt Support Group

Vanderbilt Lambda Association is a social and support for gay men, lesbians and bisexuals. The group is open to all Vanderbilt students, staff and faculty, as well as alumni of

Vanderbilt and of Peabody College. Vanderbilt Lambda Association meets Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. For further information, write P.O. Box 121743, Nashville, TN 37212.

Support For Alums, Too

Alumni members of Vanderbilt Lambda Association are forming a lesbian/gay alumni group. All alumni of Vanderbilt and of Peabody College

are welcome. For information, write Lambda Alumni Organization, P.O. Box 121743, Nashville, TN 37212.

Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Task Force

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Representatives from east, middle and west Tennessee attended the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Task Force (TGLTF) steering committee meeting Saturday, February 6, at the

Gas Lite in Nashville.

Rather than immediately forming a political action committee, TGLTF will focus its efforts on constituent lobbying, particularly of members of the Tennessee General Assembly's Health and Welfare Committee.

TGLTF will contact local lesbian and gay and supportive organizations for help in constituent lobbying for AIDS education, research and care funding.

At the upcoming TGLTF meeting in Memphis, Saturday, April 2, Gerry Scoppetuolo and Deborah Burks will present a short educational seminar on Tennessee state legislative politics.

Scoppetuolo, Burks and TGLTF President Carole Cunningham met recently with Mark Keller, staff assistant to Nashville Mayor Bill Boner.

The three met with Keller to discuss city funding for AIDS support groups, the possible creation of a Mayor's Advisory Committee on AIDS and the feasibility of a city ordinance protecting gay men and lesbians.

Among possible guest speakers TGLTF is considering bringing to the state later this spring are Tom Nolan, an openly gay city supervisor from California, and Tim Mains, an openly gay member of the Rochester, N.Y., city council.

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Opinion

DARING DO

What's Going on Here?

Welcome to the premiere issue of DARE, the gay and lesbian newspaper. After months of research, planning and prodding, we're ready to provide you each week with the news you need and the features

you want.

More than that, we're ready to provide you with the forum to air your gripes, your delights, your sorrows and your joys.

To accomplish all this, we're ready to make you some promises. And to back them up.

First: We pledge to give you

news that is as accurate and unbiased as is humanly possible.

Second: We pledge to express our opinions unreservedly on the opinion pages. And nowhere else.

Third: We pledge to provide space for the diversity of viewpoints in our community

on our opinion pages. Especially if we disagree with them.

To pull this off, Middle Tennessee's first lesbian and gay newspaper, we'll need your help. Keep us informed - let us know what you're doing. Tell us what you think - we love your letters and guest columns. And, of course, support our advertisers - let them know you saw their ads here.

And with that, we're off. We hope reading DARE is as fun and informative for you as putting it together has been for us.

Oh, yeah, about the name. Where'd we get it? Remember the old Oscar Wilde-ism "the love that dare not speak its name"?

Well, we DARE.

Care Enough to Volunteer

As we go to press, there's a little more than a week left in Nashville CARES month, also known as March. The good folks at CARES have been busting their tails to raise awareness and cash in ever-widening circles since the group's inception a couple of years ago.

CARES is a volunteer-based organization that has traditionally relied on donations to pay its rent and expenses. And most of the money and volunteers have come from the

lesbian and gay community. Only recently have such well-financed groups as the United Way helped out.

Now CARES is larger than ever, and support is coming from all around, as it should. But wider financial support doesn't negate the need for the secret ingredient that is the heart of the success of groups such as CARES. People.

And now, during CARES month, we must all remember that the most pressing need - for office help,

buddies for PWAs, education and fundraising efforts - is for people, people to volunteer.

The people who are CARES have had to fight to accomplish what they have. They've had to fight bigotry, ignorance and poverty to get out the message that someone cares about people with AIDS and even people without AIDS. Let's not make them fight apathy, too.

Volunteer for CARES. It's the least you can do. And the most.

Box 40422

DARE INVITES YOUR LETTERS AND OPINIONS, AND THIS SPACE IS INTENDED TO SERVE AS AN OPEN FORUM FOR THE FREE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS. LETTERS MUST BE TYPED, DOUBLESPOUNDED AND NO LONGER THAN 300 WORDS. LONGER SUBMISSIONS (300 - 800 WORDS) WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION IN THE SOAPBOX SPACE. ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST BE SIGNED AND INCLUDE THE WRITER'S ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER FOR VERIFICATION. THE WRITER'S NAME MAY BE WITHHELD IF REQUESTED. DEFAMATORY MATERIAL WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED.

Dear DARE,

Many of us have followed with great hope the story of Karen Thompson's struggle to free her disable lover Sharon Kowalksi. These two women jointly purchased a home in Minnesota and lived together in a loving relationship for four years.

In 1983, Sharon was severely injured as the result of an automobile accident involving a drunk driver. During the challenging months following the accident, Karen revealed the nature of their relationship to Sharon's parents. Sharon's parents reacted with hostility and denial.

To protect Sharon's right to recovery and to ensure their rights as a couple, Karen entered into a highly-contested legal battle with Sharon's parents for guardianship. Sharon's father was appointed her guardian in 1985. Since then, Sharon has been moved to a nursing home and Karen has been denied visitation and involvement in Sharon's rehabilitation. Karen has not seen Sharon in three years!

Karen has been speaking to groups across the country, pointing out the injustice of Sharon's situation. Many of us heard her at the March on Washington.

In conjunction with Women's Week '88, Karen will speak at Vanderbilt on March 25 at 7 p.m. in Furman 114. Vanderbilt Lambda Association is sponsoring her appearance. Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance will host the reception which will follow her speech. Your attendance is strongly encouraged at this event.

As Karen points out, "any of us can, in a split second, become a Sharon Kowalksi."

Deborah Burks
Nashville

Soapbox

GOT MORE TO SAY THAN YOU CAN FIT IN A LETTER? SUBMIT YOUR TYPED, DOUBLESPOUNDED OPINION PIECE OF 300 - 800 WORDS FOR SOAPBOX. ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST BE SIGNED AND INCLUDE THE WRITER'S ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER FOR VERIFICATION. DEFAMATORY MATERIAL WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED.

By JEFF ELLIS

These are not the best of times.

Daily, our ranks are depleted by a plague no one seems able to comprehend; occurrences of hate crimes perpetrated against lesbians and gay men appear to be on the upswing; and internally, strife and tension threaten to pull apart coalitions we have built.

These are not the worst of times.

Doctors and scientists around the world are working to find a cure for

AIDS; through legislative channels and the leadership of the politic-minded, hate crimes, and the people who commit them, are not unbeatable; and just five short months ago, almost three quarters of a million gathered in a united effort to overcome centuries of injustices.

But, in order that we might improve the times in which we live, it is imperative that we become known. The years of an invisible existence must end if we are to take our rightful place in the sun.

We must come out.

We must show heterosexual society that we are no longer frightened by the past. We must pledge to ourselves that we will not accept a second-

class citizenship.

Am I advocating a radical overthrow of heterosexist society? Of course not.

What I *am* advocating is the honest acceptance of ourselves and of our gay and lesbian compatriots. We must revel in our diversity. When we accept ourselves, and only then, we can demand that society in general accept us. If we do accept the role left to us by previous generations, then we deserve it. But by refusing it, we may proudly claim our place.

And the only way to do it is to be honest. Come out!

JEFF ELLIS IS A RETAIL BUYER AND THE NEWS EDITOR OF DARE. HE CAME OUT IN 1979 WHILE EDITOR IN CHIEF OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER, SIDELINES.

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EDITOR/PUBLISHER
STUART BIVIN

NEWS EDITOR
JEFF ELLIS

STAFF WRITERS
CAROLE CUNNINGHAM
SHERRE DRYDEN
SPENCER JENKINS

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RUSEL BROWN.

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Dare

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Pages

Memory Bored

By CAROLE CUNNINGHAM

Memory Board, Jane Rule. Naiad Press, 1987.

Even those nice "lady novels" in which Lillian Hellman tells us "the man puts down his fork, and the woman knows its over" succeed in the modest aim of showing rather than telling what characters think and why they act as they do. Most creative writing 101 classes would do the same thing. Some writers, Jane Rule included (more of a "lady writer" than I care for), seem to have forgotten this fundamental lesson. Gifted in clever dialogue and catchy character descriptions (*Memory Board's* Mary is called "Mount St. Mary. When she's not erupting, she greatly improves the view."), many popular writers like Rule and their readership seem to confuse the art of the screenplay, or even, to the "art" loosely, that of the television sitcom.

As a writer, Rule asks her readers to be willing observers of what she tells us is the humanity, the egalitarianism, of her characters. Character development becomes secondary to characterization - flaws are revealed not in what characters do or have done, but in what they say: "I've made some big mistakes." What those mistakes are or were and how they have shaped a character's life are conspicuously absent. To Rule, characters' admissions that they are not Ward Cleavers or Pollyannas is enough - enough to make their humnity viable, their perspective reliable.

Rule's most recent novel, *Memory Board*, offers no exception to her perennial penchant for well-defined but poorly experienced characters, nor to the often predictable scenarios seen in her previous novels. With a by now well-recognized cast of cosmosexual characters who seem to have little else to do in life but cater sensitively to the needs of everyone around them, Rule turns in another occasionally charming but generally lackluster performance. Like Rule's other work (certainly including *Desert of the Heart*, *Against the Season*, *The Young in One Another's Arms*, and *Contract with the World*), *Memory Board* attempts to integrate in peaceful coexistence a cast of wonderfully bright, sensitive Anglos whose occasional slips along the way

(not knowing how to refer to a lesbian's lover) show their humanity and not their ignorance.

Memory Board concerns the difficult reunion after nearly forty years of an aging brother and his twin sister. David, who has visited his sister only once a year since his marriage to Patricia, decides after his wife's death that her homophobia need no longer limit his exposure to his sister's life.

Early in their marriage, Patricia had discovered to her horror that David's sister Diana was a lesbian in love with a strikingly beautiful woman, Constance. For forty years, David has limited himself to a yearly visit with Diana and Constance, telling neither friends nor children nor grandchildren of her existence. David knows that reconciliation with his sister is long overdue.

The reunion is "difficult" for only a few odd pages: Diana, we are told, is "not capable of nostalgia," nor apparently, of any lasting effects from forty years of estrangement. Within a few days, brother and sister are sharing their troubles, grilling steaks and making plans.

Diana's lover Constance (never referred to as a "lover" but only as her "companion of forty years" or her "friend" or subsumed in some oblique, heterocentrist reference to marriage) is quietly but steadily losing her grip on her sense of time: the boundaries between present and past blur, often to her frustration, but more often without her recognition.

As *Memory Board's* most memorable character, Constance is interesting, sensible and provocative, but she often plays second fiddle to the more chronologically sound but chronically banal David. Constance is the only source of humor, irreverence and clear-eyed skepticism Rule allows us.

But, like all of Rule's characters, Constance must rely on a clever facility with language to display her range and depth, lacking anything but a token smattering of a history. We are told that Constance and David seem to have an uncanny affinity for one another, and by book's end we know that David will stay with Constance to care for her after Diana, whose physical decline is as precipitous as Constance's mental slide, passes away. We are left to only guess at why these two get along so well. They laugh at each other's jokes, but little more. Just as we

begin to see a glimmer of substance in a character, Rule whisks us off to a new set of platitudes about the charming grandchildren or the bickering young parents.

Rule has been praised by the straight press for refusing to engage in either "militant partisanship" or "public penitence." Unfortunately, in the process, Rule seems to create neither believable fiction nor

More disturbing and distasteful is the way Diana and Constance's relationship mimics straight marriages: Diana feels safe that Constance's affections will never drift from her because "no other woman had ever been in any position to offer Constance that blend of security and freedom Diana could once she had established her medical practice. . ."

Rule apologizes for her lesbians'

Rule

has been praised in the straight media for refusing to engage in either "militant partisanship" or "public penitence."

Unfortunately, in the process, Rule seems to create neither believable fiction nor adequate politics.

adequate politics. Adrift in an often repetitive, predictable sea of goodwill and understanding, the characters of Rule's books have little more substance than the masked players of medieval morality plays: David, well-meaning brother; Mary, skeptical, fearful daughter, afraid of Diana, but only in relation to her mother's memory; Patricia, who dead is nearly as lively as most of the other characters, a hopeless bigot redeemed by being a good wife and mother; Ben and Mike, David's grandsons, amiable, bucolic characters who appear whenever a household fixture needs mending, completely at ease with Constance and Diana and their "unconventional" relationship.

Most disturbing about Rule's unflagging goodwill toward every age group, gender and sexual orientation is that in the process, we begin to realize that *difference* has been obliterated. The characters in her novels get along so well because they are all interchangeable. David could as easily be called Diana and Constance, David.

Rule makes her lesbian characters appealing to straight audience by making them indistinguishable from the straight characters in her novels. Some would claim she does the lesbian and gay world a service by characterizing it as no different than the straight world, yet what Rule displays in *Memory Board* is a disturbing, rather subtle brand of homophobia. Rule wants lesbians and gays to be "just folks."

Diana, a character who seems closest to the narrator's voice because she is positioned so uncritically in the text, cannot even speak the words "lesbian" or "homosexual." She frowns upon some of Constance's former lovers as political women who, because of politics, are "critical and casual" in their affairs - hardly women to be taken seriously.

sexuality by carefully avoiding any references to lesbian sex (Diana and Constance at their most radical "embrace") and by placing them in "helping" professions: Diana is an obstetrician, Constance a gardener. Both express the nurturing, caring aspects of "real" womanhood that a life without childbearing ostensibly lacks, by delivering new life into the world - becoming vicarious if not actual "breeders." Neither character (nor anyone else in Rule's novels) faces the economic or societal hardships familiar to many lesbians and women in general. Their professional comfort allows them to be generous toward everyone - everyone, that is, except lesbians. We are told that Diana and Constance have no friends and almost never have guests over for dinner. Diana shudders when David asks if she reads Toronto's gay paper. We might take this as a signal from Rule that this is Diana's flaw, yet it is a flaw that is never dissected, never resolved nor dismissed as homophobic by any other character. Diana wants to be known as a "strong, caring woman, never as a "lesbian" (as if one quality is antithetical to the other).

If you believe in a world in which generous if vapid people get along like the Swiss Family Robinson, in which women just "happen" to be lesbians, as if that aspect of their lives made life no more difficult politically or demanding socially - in short, a world in which there are no hidden agenda, selfish ambitions, dubious motives, or political ambiguities, and no one about whom you would *care* to be either militantly partisan or publicly penitent, Jane Rule's *Memory Board* is for you. If you find adult life - lesbian, gay or straight - a tad bit more complicated than this, I suggest you look elsewhere.

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