

DATE

FROM THE HEART OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

FREE

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 6

THE LESBIAN AND GAY NEWSPAPER

APRIL 27-MAY 3, 1988

United Methodists on Homosexuality

General Conference to Address Denomination's Acceptance, Ordination of Lesbians and Gays

By JEFF ELLIS

Ordination of homosexual clergy will be among the issues considered as United Methodists meet during the next two weeks at their national convention in St. Louis.

The discussion of homosexuality is viewed by many to be a potentially divisive subject as the 996 Methodist delegates gather for General Conference, the quadrennial meeting of the denomination's top legislative body. The conference began Tuesday and will continue through May 6.

Church policy of denying ordination to "self-avowed practicing" homosexuals may well be the hottest issue on this year's agenda, said the Rev. William Barnes of the Edgehill United Methodist Church of Nashville.

"There will be a serious effort to move the United Methodist Church toward policies more like those adopted by the United Church of Christ," Barnes said.

But making homosexuality the focus of the conference could do an injustice to the church's agenda for the future, according to

the Rev. James H. Beasley Jr. of Calvary United Methodist Church on Hillsboro Road.

"It's one of our main objects of interest, but it would be a real shame if that became the main issue," Beasley said, suggesting that perhaps the most important topic to be considered is the church's mission in America.

During the quadrennial General Conference, representatives from the Church's congregations meet to set priorities for the coming four year period. Among other

areas of concern to be addressed at the St. Louis meeting are the funding of a Methodist university in Zimbabwe and the adoption of a hymnbook that respects traditional hymns while striving for "inclusive, nondiscriminatory" language where possible.

During the first four days of the conference, delegates will consider some 2,700 petitions and requests from individuals, groups, regional conferences and national agencies.

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Spirituality, Nutrition Claimed to Foil AIDS

By HARRISON HICKS

Two New York City men who claim to have healed themselves of AIDS through a regimen of spirituality and nutrition told a Nashville audience last week that the disease is not an automatic death sentence.

Wil Garcia and George Melton presented their story as an audience of approximately sixty listened during a seminar entitled "Getting Beyond AIDS," the latest in a series of community forums sponsored by the Metropolitan Community Church.

Stating that their struggles with the

deadly disease led them on a journey of self-discovery, the two men told a story becoming increasingly more common in the gay community.

In 1985, Garcia was diagnosed as suffering from shingles, often an early sign of HIV infection. A T-cell count confirmed the diagnosis of AIDS. Garcia's lover, Melton, was diagnosed shortly thereafter with ARC, usually a less serious manifestation of AIDS symptoms.

The two grew increasingly frustrated after undergoing further infections. Two days before turning 40, Garcia learned that he

had Kaposi's Sarcoma, a form of cancer that is often associated with AIDS. Melton's immune system meanwhile was hit with a series of viral and fungal infections.

Placing their faith in science, the pair travelled to Mexico to obtain ribavirin, an experimental drug banned in the United States at the time, in hopes of treating their symptoms.

At the time, Garcia said, "I gave all my power to the medical profession. I was grounded in the belief that science had all the answers."

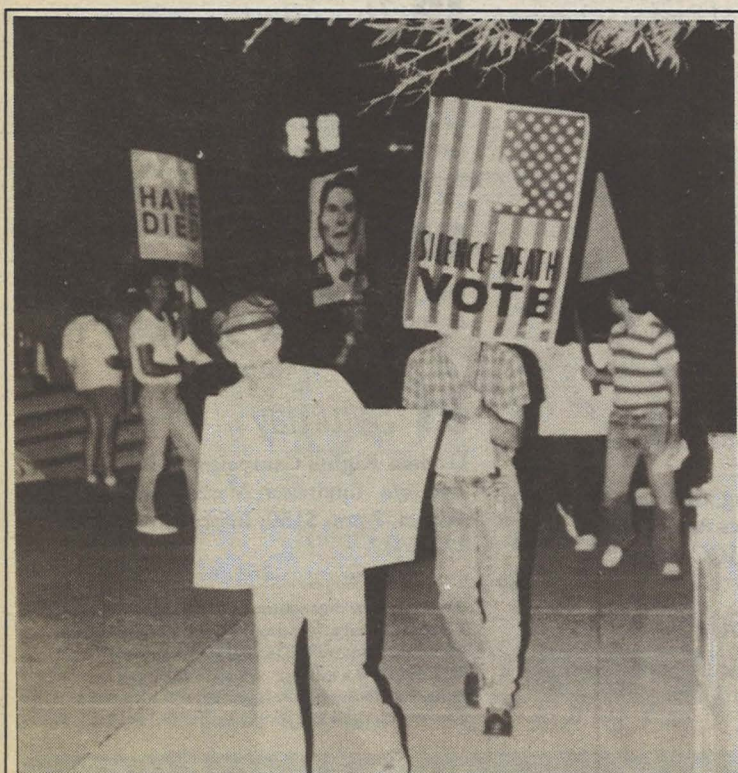
The ribavirin treatments proved to be

unsuccessful. After combining the drug with different dosages of isoprinosine, Melton and Garcia discontinued the treatments after concluding that the side effects of the drugs were worse than the symptoms.

After that decision, Melton and Garcia took different approaches in their attitudes. Melton became interested in spiritual healing, reading books by Louise Hay, Edgar Cayce and Jane Roberts.

At the same time, Garcia, a computer analyst, took a more scientific approach and constructed a computer model based on the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



THIRTY-FIVE AIDS ACTIVISTS march in front of the Cordell Hull State Office Building in downtown Nashville last Thursday. The group protested the lack of AIDS funding and civil-rights protection by the state of Tennessee.

ACT UP Stages AIDS Protest

Largest AIDS Action in Tennessee History

By JEFF ELLIS

Amid shouts of "Nothing is not enough!" more than 30 AIDS activists picketed outside the Cordell Hull Building last Thursday night, lamenting Tennessee's lack of state funding for AIDS services and education.

The twilight demonstration, staged with the imposing state capitol in the background, climaxed a week-long series of protests by members of the Nashville chapter of ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power).

"Our purpose is to wake up the Governor of the state of Tennessee to this serious problem," said Sam Adams, longtime activist and ACT-UP member. "Ned McWherter is asleep 24 hours a day as far as AIDS funding is concerned."

Carrying placards imprinted with the words "Silence = Death," the demonstrators chanted "243 are dead, what are you gonna do, Ned?"

The picket capped a week-long series of events staged by the group, which is relatively new in Nashville gay and lesbian activism circles. According to Adams, a candlelight vigil at Legislative Plaza, along with other events, symbolized efforts by the organization to be

more visible in the community.

Choice of the Cordell Hull Building was an appropriate one, according to lesbian activist Diane Easter. "We picked a spot that is visible in the downtown area," she said. "Strategically, logistically, we're in the right place to get our voices heard by state government employees and legislators who work in the Capitol Hill area."

In addition to ACT-UP members taking part in the demonstration, members of the local chapter of the National Association for People Living With AIDS (NAPLWA) were also visible.

"We're trying to become more involved in the political process," said Bryan Dobbs, vice president of the group.

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News
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Dates
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Dates

April

27 Wednesday

ACT UP Nashville Meeting, Towne House Tea Room. 7 pm.

28 Thursday

Alcoholics Anonymous Closed meeting for lesbians and gay men, MCC. 8 pm.
Lesbian Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) Phone 385-4776 or 352-5822 for details. 8 pm.

29 Friday

Gay Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting, Belmont United Methodist Church. 7:30 pm.
Nashville Ballet *Cinderella*, Polk Theatre, Tennessee Performing Arts Center, \$12 and

\$15. 8 pm.

Gay Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting, Belmont United Methodist Church. 7:30 pm.

30 Saturday

New South Softball League - *Second Annual Miss Thang*, pageant, the Chute.
Nashville Ballet *Cinderella*, Polk Theatre, Tennessee Performing Arts Center, matinee \$10 and \$13, evening \$12 and \$15. 2 pm and 8 pm.

May

1 Sunday

The Office Co-ed softball, Mericourt Park, Clarksville. 1 pm.
Tennessee Association of the Deaf Women's softball practice, Calvert Field. 1-3 pm.
Pride Week Organizational meeting,

Towne House Tea Room. 4 pm.

Alan Gold's *Miss Alan Gold's* pageant. 11 pm.

2 Monday

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

3 Tuesday

Vanderbilt Lambda Association Meeting. 5:30 pm.
Al-Anon Meeting, MCC. 6:30 pm.
Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous Closed meeting, MCC. 8 pm.

4 Wednesday

ACT UP Nashville Meeting, Towne House Tea Room. 7 pm.

5 Thursday

Vanderbilt AIDS Project *Safe Ball*, fundraiser, Urban Lounge. \$12. 7:30 pm.

Alcoholics Anonymous Closed meeting for lesbians and gay men, MCC. 8 pm.

Lesbian Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) Phone 385-4776 or 352-5822 for details. 8 pm.

6 Friday

Nashville Ballet *Cinderella*, Fine Arts Theatre, UT-Chattanooga, \$12 and \$15. 8 pm.

Gay Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting, Belmont United Methodist Church. 7:30 pm.

7 Saturday

Nashville Ballet *Cinderella*, Fine Arts Theatre, UT-Chattanooga, matinee \$10 and \$13, evening \$12 and \$15. 2 pm and 8 pm.

8 Sunday

Mothers' Day.

9 Monday

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11 Wednesday

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13 Friday

Gay Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting, Belmont United Methodist Church. 7:30 pm.

14 Saturday

The Office *Miss Gay Clarksville*, \$4. 9 pm.

15 Sunday

The Office Co-ed softball, Mericourt Park, Clarksville. 1 pm.
Tennessee Association of the Deaf Women's softball practice, Calvert Field. 1-3 pm.
Pride Week Organizational meeting, Towne House Tea Room. 4 pm.

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Lesbian Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) Phone 385-4776 or 352-5822 for details. 8 pm.

20 Friday

Gay Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting, Belmont United Methodist Church. 7:30 pm.

21 Saturday

Human Rights Campaign Fund *Southeastern Gala*, fundraiser, Marriott Marquis, Atlanta. 7 pm. \$150. Information phone 373-4047.

Your event or organization can be listed at no charge in Dates or Listings. Just drop a postcard or letter to DARE, Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204-0422, or phone 292-9623 and leave a message. Please include information about time, location, cost, sponsor, and a contact person's name with address and/or phone number for verification.

Listings

RESTAURANTS AND CLUBS

NASHVILLE

The Cabaret	1711 Hayes St	320-7082
The Chute	2535 Franklin Rd	297-4571
Chez Collette	407 1st Av South	256-9134
Crazy Cowboy II	2311 Franklin Rd	269-5318
The Gas Lite	167 1/2 8th Av North	254-1278
Juanita's	1700 4th Av South	256-9681
The Jungle	306 4th Av South	256-9411
New Attitude	1803 Church St	320-5154
Ralph's Rutledge Hill Tavern	515 2nd Av South	256-9682
Victor/Victoria's	111 8th Av North	244-7256
Warehouse 28	2529 Franklin Rd	385-9689
World's End	1713 Church St	329-3480

CLARKSVILLE

The Office	130 Franklin St	645-1157
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CHATTANOOGA

Alan Gold's	1100 McCallic Av	
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ORGANIZATIONS

American Civil Liberties Union Hedy Weinberg, *Director*
Box 120160, Nashville 37212 256-7028

Conductors Box 40261, Nashville 37204

Nashville CARES Sandee Potter, *Director*
Box 25107, Nashville 37202 385-1510
AIDS Crisis Line 385-AIDS

Nashville Women's Alliance
Box 120834, Nashville 37212 366-0555

National Organization for Women (Tennessee) Elizabeth Jamison, *President*
Box 120523, Nashville 37212

Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA)
Box 24181, Nashville 37212

Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Task Force (TGLTF) Carole Cunningham, *President*
Box 24181, Nashville 37212

Tennesseans Keeping Abortion Legal and Safe (TKALS)
Box 120871, Nashville 37212 297-8540

Vanderbilt AIDS Project
Hotline 322-AIDS

Vanderbilt Lambda Association
Box 121743, Nashville 37212

Women's Resource Center (YWCA)
1608 Woodmont Blvd 385-3952

SERVICES

Jane Parkey *Attorney* 227-3958

Irene K. Ratner, Ed.D. *Psychologist* 298-5369

Suite 234 B, 4004 Hillsboro Rd

RELIGIOUS

Metropolitan Community Church Rev Paul Tucker, *Pastor* 320-0288

131 15th Av North

Methodists to Discuss Homosexuality at Conference

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The homosexuality issue was first addressed in 1972 when delegates voted to include the idea that homosexuality "is incompatible with Christian teaching." More liberal members of the denomination have tried unsuccessfully since then to rescind the phrase.

However, in Nashville area churches, there seems to be no consensus of opinion on the subject of homosexuality, according to Beasley.

"There seems to be no consensus in our church, although in other churches I've pastored there have been several homosexuals in favor of changing the language and other people vehemently opposed to homosexuality in the church," Beasley said.

Personally, Beasley believes "you need to

be celibate if you're a practicing Christian" homosexual.

"The teachings of the Bible preclude practicing active homosexuality," he said. "But the grace of God cannot be refused to anybody. Those that enter into a life of Christianity cannot continue to be homosexually active."

The Edgehill church, one of about 25 "reconciling congregations" in the United Methodist Church, embraces the belief that "all offices in the church should be open to anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation," according to Barnes.

"Our church speaks a gracious and reconciling word on the tolerance of sexual orientation. At our church, a majority of members would like to see the church's policy on the ordination of homosexuals

liberalized," he said.

Barnes does not, however, expect the General Conference to "formally" endorse the ordination of homosexuals.

"I'm very doubtful any serious changes will be made," Barnes said. "All polls taken prior to the Conference indicate that will be the case."

Barnes suggested that most of the major issues being considered by the delegates "are offshoots of a reactionary, conservative mood" which seems to grip the United Methodist Church, which with 9.1 million

members is the second largest Protestant denomination in this country. He said that a move toward a more "scriptural-centered" point of view indicates a swing toward conservatism within the denomination.

"Conservative views of homosexuality, in terms of scriptural interpretation, are highly questionable," Barnes said.

Those who want to continue the ban on homosexual ministers claim they have the backing of the Scripture. They further argue that easing current restrictions condones the gay lifestyle.

ACT UP Draws 35 to Protest Group Decries Lack of State Funding for AIDS Issues

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Dobbs explained that NAPLWA members are involved in a campaign to raise money for direct services to those in the Nashville area who are living with AIDS. A combination of fund raising and grants have enabled the fledgling organization to take steps in that direction, he said.

"We need all the participation we can get," Dobbs said, calling upon the community for support.

"I encourage you to fight. We must say aloud, frequently and often, that we must secure state funding," Dobbs told the crowd. "We will keep fighting until we make a difference."

According to Easter, three persons are diagnosed weekly as being HIV-positive in Middle Tennessee. However, state government is apparently dragging its feet in appropriating funds for services or education, activists said.

"We have everybody from drag queens to high school students raising money for AIDS. Why can't the Governor?" asked Deborah Burks, former politics co-chair for the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance.

Yet while lobby efforts continue, members of all the groups represented in Thursday's demonstration vowed to continue to be both more vocal and visible in order to call attention to the situation.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

study of patients with terminal illnesses. Using the model while studying those patients who had survived their illnesses, Garcia discovered two common factors.

"The more difficult the patient," he said, "the better the survival rate," pointing to the need for patients to assist in their own recovery. The other common factor he noted, was a "refusal to accept the fatality of their illnesses."

Taking these factors to heart, Melton and Garcia began to incorporate other alternative treatments into their therapy, experimenting with nutrition and exercise and putting a stronger emphasis on spiritual healing. Techniques they used included meditation, creative visualization, emotional therapy and rediscovering their faith in God.

Because of their spiritual healing process, both men say, they are alive today. Recent T-cell tests indicate normal counts and both feel healthy, said Melton, noting that he hasn't even had a cold in two years.

Last year, Melton and Garcia decided to take their story to others in order to combat the growing attitude of hopelessness concerning AIDS.

"We feel very deeply in our hearts that there are choices that can be made," said Garcia. "Death is not the issue. The issue is what you're going to do between now and then. You can choose to live."

Reaction to the seminar was generally positive. The purpose of the discussion, according to the Rev. Paul Tucker of MCC, was to raise an aspect of the AIDS crisis that hasn't yet been heard.

"MCC believes in healing and we want to offer information and insight in whatever ways it comes," Tucker said.

Gerry Scoppetuolo, founder of ACT-UP Nashville, cautioned the audience to be careful in making decisions based on the alternatives discussed by the two men.

"Skeptics make the best believers," Melton replied, who went on to note that only by experimenting with different medical and spiritual therapies and techniques could AIDS patients discover what works best for them.

However, Melton said, he felt the most important thing was treating all aspects of the disease - mind, body and spirit.

"If you let medicine be your God, it will be a God with clay feet," he said.



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Men in Dresses: Drag Through the Decades



"KARYL NORMAN, the Creole Fashion Plate," circa 1920.

Second in a four-part series
By SHERRE DRYDEN

"I am credibly informed that there is, in the city of Washington, D.C., a convocation of negro men called the drag dance, which is an orgie of lascivious debauchery beyond pen power of description."

-Dr. Charles H. Hughes, 1893.

It seems that men have always impersonated women. And nearly as long as men have impersonated women someone in society has found it objectionable.

What began as a legitimate part of mainstream culture was gradually ghettoized along with the homosexuals who became identified with its performance. It is not clear whether female impersonation became marginalized because of its association with homosexuality, or it it became homosexual because it was marginal. Perhaps homosexuals were permitted to take over female impersonation because it was no longer valuable to "real" men.

Western transvestic performance had its roots in pagan religion, passed into folk ceremonies and seasonal festivities, onto the stage, and from there became a routine apt of popular entertainment until it was pushed underground in the 1920s and '30s.

In Athenian drama, originally performed during festivals to honor Dionysius, all female roles were played by men. The comic possibilities of transvestism were extended in Roman drama and seasonal festivals, where the object was liberation and the spreading of anarchy.

Theatrical transvestism was not, of course, all comic and vulgar. There was acting as well as impersonation. Women were not permitted on stage; the men who played female roles were skillful at natural portrayal of women.

When theatres opened again in 1660, after being closed by Puritans in 1642, women were playing the female roles. The emphasis was on civilizing; cross-dressing was fit only to laughed at. The men who had played the roles had little recourse but to begin to mock

themselves. Transvestism on stage became farcical rather than serious, a connotation it has never lost.

Burlesque cross dressing can be traced to 1702, but in the 19th century it took on a particularly grotesque face - the "dame." With the emergence of music halls, English transvestite performance found a home. E.W. Marshall was dressing up in the 1850s and by 1870 most performers had a drag number in their repertory.

In fact, using the word "drag" to mean wearing the clothes of the opposite sex (it refers to the drag of the actor's skirt as distinct from the non-dragginess of his trousers) dates from this period.

The tradition of female impersonation in America also stretches back into the 19th century, to the minstrel show and vaudeville. Marshall Pike, the first female impersonator in minstrels, performed at the White House in 1847 for President James K. Polk of Tennessee. When the minstrel show was replaced by vaudeville as America's premiere popular entertainment form, many impersonators made the transition.

Perhaps most famous was Julian Eltinge, originally billed as Miss Simplicity. His shows and films were broadly comic, but his impersonations were elaborate and meticulous. Compared to the great beauty of his day, he was called Mr. Lillian Russell, and became the first internationally famous female impersonator.

But in 1940, Eltinge was refused a waiver of a new Los Angeles ordinance that prohibited cross-dressing (part of a Los Angeles Police Department crackdown on homosexuals) and faded into obscurity.

Karyl Norman was known in the 1900s as the Creole Fashion Plate (behind his back, fellow vaudevillians called him "the queer old fashion plate"). He travelled with his mother, who made all of his costumes.

Fifi D'Orsay, who starred with Norman in the 1924 Greenwich Village Follies, said: "He was marvelous. . . Karyl Norman was a wonderful guy, beloved and respected by everybody, although he was a gay boy and the gay boys in those days it was harder for them than it is today. He did an act with two pianos and those gorgeous clothes. He had such and he was so divine."

In the 1920s, Bert Savoy and Jay Brennan had a campy act that appears to be an immediate predecessor of modern drag.

Savoy played a gossipy, know-it-all New

Yorker, always ready to dish her friend Margie. Savoy always overdressed and never removed his wig to acknowledge that he was really a man.

Mae West is believed to have based many of her mannerisms on those of Savoy, who was known for lines like "You don't know the half of it, dearie," and "Mercy, ain't Miss God cutting up something awful?"

Savoy and Brennan's performances are described as obscene, vulgar and swishy.

Hundreds of others were female impersonators on the vaudeville stage - one critic wrote of entering a vaudeville house "chilled by the fear than another female impersonator is about to confront you" - including the black Sissieretta Jones, Malcolm Scott (brother of the first man to reach the South Pole) and Francis Renault, who was billed as "The Original Slave of Fashion."

Most of vaudeville's female impersonators disappeared from the scene in the twenties and early thirties.

According to Milton Berle, Karyl Norman, who died in 1947, ended his career as a performer in the San Francisco drag club Finocchio's.

To most Americans in the '30s, homosexuals were frightening. The popular stage was no place for them; the female impersonators lost their popularity and went underground.

Next week: Women in Suits: a look at male impersonators.

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Nashville Ballet To Perform "Cinderella"

From STAFF REPORTS

Cinderella, one of childhood's most beloved fairy tale heroines, will be brought to life by the Nashville Ballet in three performances this weekend at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center's Polk Theatre.

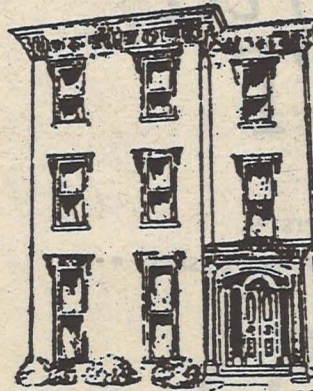
Choreographed by Edward Meyers and set to Sergei Prokofiev's captivating score, the production is Nashville Ballet's first full evening-length ballet, according to Dane LaFontsee, the company's artistic director.

Nashville Ballet principles Karen Portner and Michelle Geryk will alternate in the roles

of Cinderella and the Fairy Godmother, with Barry Thane Gager dancing the role of Prince Charming.

Cinderella will be presented Friday and Saturday nights at 8 p.m., along with a Saturday matinee performance at 2 p.m. Ticket prices are \$15 and \$13 for the evening performances and \$13 and \$10 for the matinee.

The Nashville Ballet production of Cinderella is being underwritten by grants from First American National Bank and Ingram Industries, Inc.



The Gas Lite

4:30 pm - 1 am Monday - Thursday

4:30 pm - 3 am Friday, Saturday

Noon - 3 am Sunday

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Reunion: A Family Comes to Terms With AIDS

By JEFF ELLIS

There are times in every person's life when we come face to face with our own mortality.

When we are young, we expect to live forever. Death is an abstract notion which we only experience vicariously. Now, however, we are faced daily with the realities of death and dying as our numbers are depleted by a plague, the likes of which are incomprehensible and spoken about in vague, hushed tones.

Then, someone you love is stricken and AIDS is brought home to you. No longer can you deal with death in the abstract.

Such is the case of my family now that we know my nephew, Jamie, 25, is living with AIDS.

Last October, while hundreds of thousands of people were marching on Washington for lesbian and gay rights, I sat in a hospital room in Boynton Beach, Fla., as Jamie underwent a series of blood transfusions.

While people fought for his rights in the cradle of our nation's government, Jamie fought for his life in a sterile, anaseptic atmosphere.

Despite my knowing of Jamie's condition prior to my arrival, I was ill-prepared for what I found when I arrived. He looked like a victim of Hitler's concentration camps. His body was weak, his breathing labored. Although he had been thrilled by the news of my visit, his body had rebelled and his doctors

admitted him to the hospital for the sixth time in as many months.

Supporting Jamie during this time was his lover, Lee, a social worker who had witnessed the abuse and bigotry of both hospital workers and laypeople as Jamie lived with the disease.

And there was Scott, Jamie's younger brother, who had left Nashville to help care for him several months before my visit.

"There are so many things I don't understand about this," Scott says. "But it's opened my eyes to a lot. You certainly find out who your friends are."

Since moving to south Florida, Jamie's circle of friends had grown quite large. However, when news of his illness began to circulate, many of his friends began to drop from sight, calling infrequently at first, then not at all.

"I'm not sure if it was because they couldn't deal with the fact he has AIDS, or if they were afraid they would catch it if they were in the same room," Scott wonders.

Scott had lived in Fort Lauderdale for several months in 1985 and had several friends he was delighted to see again. But two of those friends, once they learned of Jamie's illness, were less than eager to see Scott.

"It really hurt when I found out Hector, who had been my best friend, left town without saying goodbye," Scott says. "I just can't understand how anyone could act that way."

During my October visit, much of the conversation centered on reminiscences of our childhood, the weekends and summers my nephews spent with my parents and me, the games we played, the things that are only funny if you know the people and the place.

Jamie seemed almost like his old self at times, laughing and making jokes, as the new blood flowed in his veins.

home."

But try as I might, I still couldn't work up the courage to tell Mama. Luckily, when I tried to tell my sister Charlotte, she had already guessed the truth and I was spared that strained moment of shock. I then set a deadline for myself to tell Mama.

My self-imposed deadline came and went, and still I hadn't told Mama. How do you

"I'm not sure if it was because they couldn't deal with the fact he has AIDS, or if they were afraid they would catch it if they were in the same room," Scott wonders.

"I really wish Mama Ellis were here," he said. "I'd love for her to see the ocean."

As my mother's first grandchild, Jamie had always held a special place in Mama's heart, but because we didn't want to worry her, we still had not told her of his condition.

"Uncle Jeff, you will tell her when you get back?" he asked.

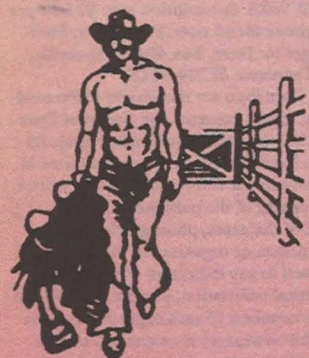
"Of course, I will," I lied. "I'll find the perfect time and tell her when I get back

tell your mother that someone she loves is almost certainly going to die? It would break her heart, I knew, and I wanted to spare her any pain I could.

But, by not telling her, Jamie was forced to endure the pain, not only of AIDS, but of living a lie.

So Jamie decided to tell Mama the news himself.

Next week: Jamie tells Mama Ellis.



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Views

United Methodists Should Show the Grace of God

For the next two weeks, delegates from across the country will meet in St. Louis to decide the course for the United Methodist Church for the next four years.

Perhaps the most volatile issue facing the Church in its quadrennial conference is the ordination of homosexuals - what many consider to be a slap in the face of the conservative wing of the denomination.

Since 1972, when delegates to that year's General Conference issued an edict which stated homosexuality is not compatible with the teachings of the scripture, the controversy has swirled. At every subsequent General Conference, the issue has been debated vigorously. Yet today it remains unchanged.

The country's second largest Protestant denomination, by refusing to ordain homosexuals as members of its clergy, is turning its back on many of its members. There are lesbian and gay members of many, if not all, United Methodist congregations. Whether they are open about their sexuality

or not, they are being disenfranchised by the Church's refusal to recognize them, or others like them, as fit to lead a congregation.

The 996 men and women who are meeting in St. Louis are faced with a dilemma.

If they rescind the restrictions barring

homosexuals from the pulpit, they can greet the future with courage and pride. If they refuse to lift the restrictions, they are mired in the past.

All indications are that the prohibitive language will remain the same. We should

not be surprised by this. A conservative undercurrent is prevalent throughout our society now and we, members of the gay community, may go under with the tide.

We should, therefore, make our presence known.

There are many progressive, forward-

The country's second largest Protestant denomination, by refusing to ordain homosexuals as members of its clergy, is turning its back on many of its members.

thinking individuals in the United Methodist Church. Through combined efforts we can overcome the Church's bigotry.

It is our fervent hope that the delegates next week lift the ban on homosexual ordinations. After all, as a local pastor said,

"The grace of God cannot be denied anyone."

The United Methodist Church is not above that, we think.

Hey! You Out There! Can You Hear Us?

O.K., you guys and gals.
The jig's up.

For six weeks now, we've been writing and editing our little hearts out.

And you've been picking up DARE like it's going out of style. Which it definitely is not.

But try as we might, we can't get y'all off your literary duffs. What does it take to get you to write to us?

You can write about almost anything you like, anything that's on your mind that might be of interest to the lesbian and gay community, so long as it's not defamatory. That means almost anything but name-calling.

If you're worried about who might see your name, remember that DARE is distributed in lesbian and gay bars, and in the

We know you can read. Now let's see if you can write.

gay and lesbian sections of bookstores.

Besides, remember that we make no claims (or promises) about the sexual orientation of

anyone who writes for us.

Now, for the details.

You can write to our letters to the editor section, Box 40422, any opinion piece up to 300 words.

If you have more to say than that, we'd be glad to consider your piece for SOAPBOX, an opinion column for letters 300-800 words long.

Surely you have something on your mind.

Let us know what it is.

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Dare

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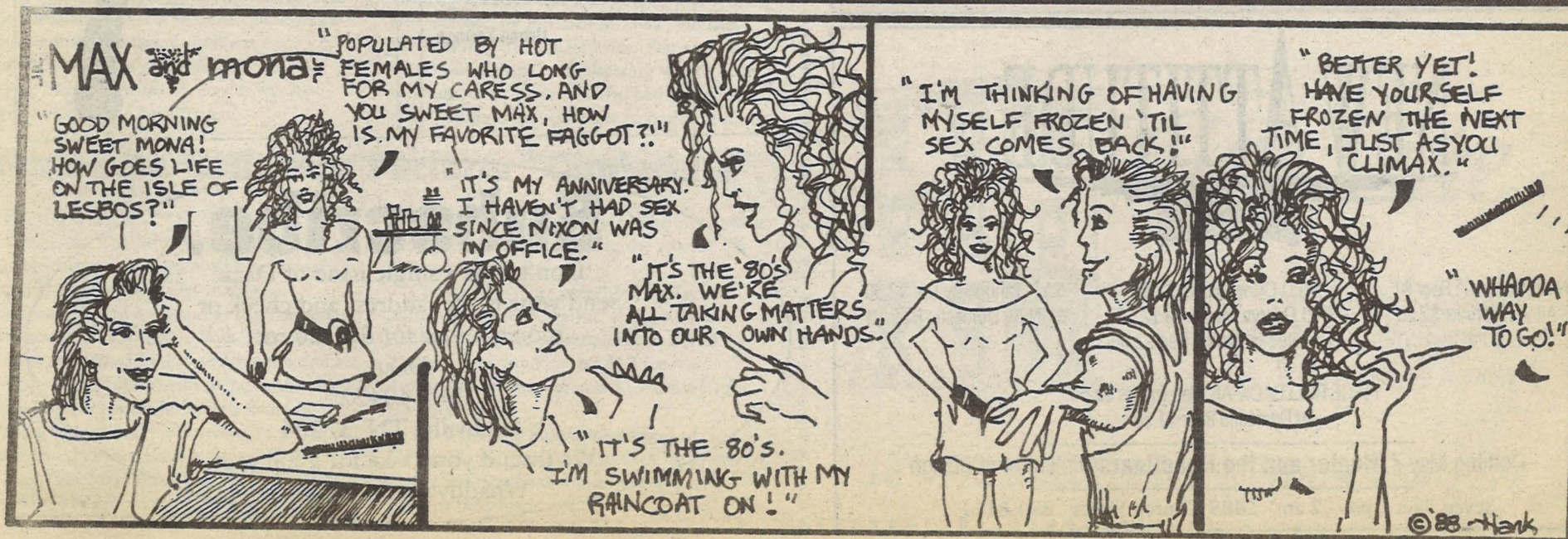
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Max and Mona™



Curtains

Dos Lesbos Dos Locos Muy Lesbos

By STUART BIVIN

Lea DeLaria (Peg) and Kelley Edwards (Gracie) took Nashville by the hair again Saturday night at Vanderbilt University's Underwood Auditorium, but not all the drama was on the stage.

The rollicking musical comedy *Dos Lesbos* made its second area appearance in the show's two-year-plus tour, playing to an audience of over 130, after Vanderbilt University officials reluctantly honored their commitment to allow the performance to take place on campus.

And, like the show's first performance here last November, the audience loved it - every bit of it.

The two-woman play, by Terry Baum and Carolyn Meyers, deals with all the familiar bugaboos of gay and lesbian life: on-the-job harassment, coming out to parents, dealing with heterosexual men, meeting your lover's parents, and, of course, sex.

Along the way, potshots are taken at

ignorance, bigotry, and heterosexism.

Gracie gets things rolling right off the bat with a screaming diatribe about the bigots at her job. Seems some bigot at the office ended a juicy piece of gossip with the kicker "At least it was a man and a woman. IF. YOU. KNOW. WHAT. I. MEAN."

Peg then gives Gracie lessons in how to announce proudly, "I am a Lezz-bee-ann!"

Now, politics is great fun in its own way, but it's the rare piece that makes it funny enough to really get a belly laugh.

Dos Lesbos had the crowd cackling from the first number, *I Don't Care*, a musical declaration of independence from heterosexual society and its mores.

The coming-out-to-your-parents vignette was so pointed I had to laugh, if only to keep from crying, as I did with the scenes surrounding Gracie's introduction of her lover Peg to her parents.

Never truer words than Gracie's observation that "Believe me, manners fly out the window when your kid's a queer," and Peg's

recitation of the Eleventh Commandment: "Thou shalt not be civil to thy child's homosexual lover."

The show's tensest moments came a full 24 hours before curtain, when it appeared that Vanderbilt officials would not allow the production to proceed.

Johan Madson, Dean of Students and Assistant Provost at Vanderbilt, said that there was "concern" on the part of the administration that the production would cause the University "difficulties" because of the arrests of two male members of the University faculty in the Metro police underage sex-for-pay sting last February.

Late Friday afternoon, however, the administration bowed to pressure from the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance and



KELLEY EDWARDS AND LEA DELARIA as Gracie and Peg in *Dos Lesbos*.

from Vanderbilt Lambda Association, the co-sponsors of the production, and allowed the groups to use the Auditorium.

Anyway, it was a terrific show. I'd pay to see it again. I'd also be willing to buy tickets for some Vanderbilt administrators to see it.

IF. YOU. KNOW. WHAT. I. MEAN.

Pages

Patrick Gale's Hot in "August"

Kansas in August, Patrick Gale. Dutton, 1987.

By JOE MAROHL

Offhand, I can think of only two public figures with whom, on the basis of their works alone, I would very much like to go to bed: the singer/songwriter/holy man Morrissey, and the novelist Patrick Gale, whose third novel, *Kansas in August*, was published in America this year. Call it lust of an intellectual sort.

Gale is little heard of in the United States, and I am not well-informed of his popularity in the U.K. He is, nevertheless, one of the brightest of the new writers whose interests center on the short story and the realistic novel. His three brief novels (not one is even 200 pages in length) reveal a well-developed

gift for creating fascinating protagonists (usually female) and idyllic (yet plausibly flawed) homosexual romances, not too heavy on melodrama, with a dash of activist politics for texture. Frequently witty as E.M. Forster and as profoundly common-sense as Iris Murdoch, Gale writes in the same "inextricably linked lives" genre as do Murdoch and Robertson Davies.

Unlike the two previous titles (*Ease* and *The Aerodynamics of Pork*, both 1986, both also published by Dutton), the title *Kansas in August* does have a readily apparent connection with the events of the novel, though the story does not take place in the state of Kansas or the month of August. The title is a phrase from a Rogers and Hammerstein song, which we learn to associate with one of the principal characters who has immersed himself in American

musical theater. The sense of happy romance and corny situational comedy, typical of the musical stage, also typifies the events of this novel.

The narrative point of view of the book is split four ways: We have Henry and Hilary, who are sister and brother, respectively; Rufus, who is Henry's and Hilary's lover; and Sumitra, Hilary's 11-year-old Pakistani neighbor, pupil and religious devotee (she thinks the young man's an incarnation of the Hindu "Prince Goddess").

The four protagonists lead separate lives which are, unknown to them, connected.

Henry (Henrietta) is a "high-powered psychiatrist," who, in order to attract a man (Rufus, known to her by another name), pretends to be "something more erotic and less awe-inspiring," like a physiotherapist named Sandy. Hilary is a 25-year-old chorus boy hopeful, now teaching English to delinquents in order to make money, whose paternal instincts are suddenly awakened

when he finds a baby abandoned in a subway. Rufus, an emotionally ambivalent bisexual pianist, conducts separate affairs with both "Sandy" and Hilary, unaware that they are related. Sumitra is a child troubled by her family's religious extremism on one hand and her awakening sexual identity on the other, both of which she imaginatively projects onto Hilary.

Gale blends these four characters' lives with playfulness and sympathetic intelligence. With a novel this compact, it is difficult to say much more without giving the story away. As in his preceding novels, Gale conducts the reader through a series of inherently appealing incidents to a well-prepared-for climax, which, with the force of recognition, draws all of the plot elements and dramatis personae together.

Suffice it to say, then: This book, a warm glass of Scotch and Morrissey on low on the stereo are a perfect way to spend a rainy Sunday afternoon in bed.

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