

Daare

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 8

THE LESBIAN AND GAY NEWSPAPER

MAY 11-17, 1988



The Rev. Paul Tucker, pastor of Nashville's Metropolitan Community Church, returned from the church's district convention to find his home vandalized.

Bashed

Anti-gay Vandals Hit Paul Tucker's Home

By **JEFF ELLIS**
News Editor

Vandals struck the home of the pastor of the local Metropolitan Community Church Saturday, April 30, in the latest "queer bashing" episode in Nashville.

The east Nashville home of the Rev. Paul Tucker and Philip Wright was "a shambles" following the incident, which is still under investigation by Metro police.

According to Tucker, he discovered his apartment had been broken into when he returned home Sunday. His television, stereo and other electronic equipment were badly damaged by the vandals, who apparently took nothing.

"They had taken our clothes out of the closets and poured ketchup, spaghetti sauce, milk and anything else they could find in the refrigerator," Tucker said.

Metro police responded quickly to the call for action and Tucker said he was heartened by the response and concern

shown by police officers.

The vandals also had scrawled "faggot" and "homo" on the walls and on Tucker's vehicle parked outside.

"They even drained the water from my aquarium and all my fish died," Tucker said.

Luckily, Tucker said, most of the damage was repairable, and he gave credit to the lesbian and gay community for the assistance they provided in the clean up.

Plans are currently under way for a fund-raising barbecue to help defray costs of repairs and replacing damaged items.

The minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church, and his wife, offered to re-paint the apartment and Tucker's landlord replaced the doors and locks to guard against future break-in attempts.

Despite the incident, Tucker said he remains committed to the cause of lesbian and gay rights in Nashville.

The attack on Tucker's home followed the bombing of the Metropolitan Community Church here several years ago.

Teen Abortion Bill Passes

By **CURT FOLTS**
Staff Writer

A bill that will prohibit doctors from performing abortions on minors without the notarized, written consent of their parents is now awaiting the signature of Gov. Ned McWherter to make it law.

The bill, passed in the state senate by a 24-5 margin, was overwhelmingly approved by members of the state house of representatives by an 82-8 margin, with nine members abstaining.

Unless the bill is vetoed by McWherter within ten days of receipt in his office, it will become law effective July 1.

"Opponents of this legislation stress the 'right' of a woman to choose an abortion. But these are children," said Dave Jones, spokesman for Tennessee Volunteers for Life, the most vocal supporters of the bill.

Jones added that a girl's health, her life and her ability to reproduce at a later date may all be placed in jeopardy because of an abortion.

However, Cathy Fenner, director of Tennesseans Keeping Abortions Legal and Safe (TKALS), took issue with Jones' comments.

"TKALS is working toward safe, legal and accessible abortion clinics throughout Tennessee. We are pro-choice, not pro-abortion," Fenner said.

Under the bill, minors seeking an abortion may do so without their parents' consent only if a judge deems the situation

serious enough to grant the girl permission.

The judicial bypass is to be ruled upon within 48 hours of an appeal. Any appeal must be filed within 10 days of the decision. The hearings must be held in private with only the judge, the girl and an advocate present.

"Anti-choice religious groups are attempting to prevent the right of women to choose for their own bodies as determined by the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973," said Hedy Weinberg, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee.

Weinberg said the ACLU is actively working to get all women's groups together in an effort to form a "sound strategy and a strong lobbying effort" against further anti-choice legislation.

"The gay and lesbian community is asked to join us. We need to be ready to counter anti-choice legislation," Weinberg said.

"This bill, which was proposed under the guise of protecting teenage girls and promoting family communication, is endangering the lives of young women," she continued.

Fenner called the bill's passage in the state legislature "a big disappointment."

"But you never know what will happen in a year. The anti-choice people are very active and vocal. Although the legislators we know are in the majority, they vote with the more vocal constituents," Fenner warned.

Women in "Sticky" Business

By **JEFF ELLIS**
News Editor

Melanie Mayron and Catlin Adams have great hair. Great glasses. Great clothes. And one great little movie.

The two masterminds behind the just-released *Sticky Fingers* were in Nashville Sunday to promote the film's opening at Fountain Square, where they were surrounded by rabid fans and bemused onlookers.

"These are all-cotton T-shirts, all-cotton!" cried Adams, who co-wrote, co-produced and directed the film, as she admired the green official *Sticky Fingers* shirts.

"This is almost like shopping," chimed in Mayron, her shock of red hair accented by the black-rimmed glasses she wore. She co-wrote and co-produced the film in which she stars as Lolly, a cellist with a problem.

"This is by far the nicest center we've seen," Adams offered as she autographed a shirt proffered by a fan.

Thus far, the promotional tour for the film has taken the two, along with publicist Ed Cassidy, to Dallas, Seattle and New York. Although she stopped in Nashville for lunch once during a cross-country trip, Mayron claims this as her "first official trip" to Music City.

Sticky Fingers is about two friends, both musicians, who are on the brink of financial ruin, only to be the recipients of a windfall, albeit one with some strings attached. It's a laughing-out-loud kind of funny movie that's reminiscent of Hollywood's screwball
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Chattanooga's
lesbian gift,
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Dates

May

11-15 Wednesday/Sunday

Cobblestone Gallery Tennessee Special Olympics Art Show. 9am-5:30pm. Free. Information phone 242-7054.

11 Wednesday

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

12 Thursday

Nashville CARES AIDS/ARC Support Group. 5pm.
Alternatives Alcoholics Anonymous Closed meeting for lesbians and gay men, MCC. 8pm.
Lesbian Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) Information phone 385-4776 or 352-5822. 8pm.

13-15 Friday/Saturday

Nashville CARES Volunteer

training. Information phone 385-1510.

13 Friday

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

14 Saturday

Nashville CARES AIDS/ARC Support Group. 4pm.
The Office *Miss Gay Clarksville*, \$4. 9pm.
The Chute *USA Male Revue*. 10:30pm and 12:30am.

15 Sunday

Metropolitan Community Church Worship services, 11am and 7pm.
The Office Co-ed softball, Mericourt Park, Clarksville. 1pm.
Tennessee Association of the Deaf Women's softball practice, Calvert Field. 1-3pm.
Pride Week Organizational meeting, Towne House Tea Room. 4pm.
Warehouse 28 *Miss Tennessee-Continenta*, pageant. 9pm.

16 Monday

Nashville CARES AIDS/ARC Support Group. 5:30pm.
Nashville CARES Gay Couples Support Group. 6pm.
Nashville CARES Family Support Group. 6:30pm.
Lambda Group Closed Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for gay men and lesbians, Unitarian Church. 8pm.

17 Tuesday

Vanderbilt Lambda Association Meeting. 6pm. Information phone 322-6026.
Nashville CARES HIV Education Support Groups. 7pm.
Al-Anon Meeting, MCC. 6:30pm.
Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous Closed meeting, MCC. 8pm.

18 Wednesday

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

19 Thursday

Nashville CARES AIDS/ARC Support Group. 5pm.
Alcoholics Anonymous Closed meeting for lesbians and gay men, MCC. 8pm.
Lesbian Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) Information phone 385-4776 or 352-5822. 8pm.

20 Friday

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

21 Saturday

Nashville CARES AIDS/ARC Support Group. 4pm.
Human Rights Campaign Fund *Southeastern Gala*, fundraiser, Marriott Marquis, Atlanta. 7 pm. \$150. Information phone 373-4047.

22 Sunday

Metropolitan Community Church Worship services, 11am and 7pm.
The Office Co-ed softball, Mericourt Park, Clarksville. 1pm.
Tennessee Association of the Deaf Women's softball practice, Calvert Field. 1-3pm.
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ACT UP Nashville Meeting, Towne House Tea Room. 7pm.

26 Thursday

Nashville CARES AIDS/ARC Support Group. 5pm.
Alcoholics Anonymous Closed meeting for lesbians and gay men, MCC. 8pm.
Lesbian Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) Information phone 385-4776 or 352-5822. 8pm.
Nashville CARES Board of Directors meeting, Room 106, American Red Cross Building. 7pm.

27 Friday

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

28 Saturday

Nashville CARES AIDS/ARC Support Group. 4pm.
Human Rights Campaign Fund *Southeastern Gala*, fundraiser, Marriott Marquis, Atlanta. 7pm. \$150. Information phone 373-4047.
Metropolitan Community Church *Homosexuality: What the Bible Does and Does Not Say*, Part 1, video. Community Forum. 8:30pm. Free.

29 Sunday

NAMES Project *The Names Quilt*, exhibit, Exhibit Hall A, World Congress Center, Atlanta. 9am-11pm. Free.
Metropolitan Community Church Worship services, 11am and 7pm.
The Office Co-ed softball, Mericourt Park, Clarksville. 1pm.
Tennessee Association of the Deaf Women's softball practice, Calvert Field. 1-3pm.
Pride Week Organizational meeting, Towne House Tea Room. 4pm.

30 Monday

Memorial Day
Nashville CARES AIDS/ARC Support Group. 5:30pm.
Nashville CARES Gay Couples Support Group. 6pm.
Nashville CARES Family Support Group. 6:30pm.
Lambda Group Closed Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for gay men and lesbians, Unitarian Church. 8pm.

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 McCallie Av	
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ORGANIZATIONS

American Civil Liberties Union	Hedy Weinberg, <i>Director</i>	
	Box 120160, Nashville 37212	256-7028
Conductors	Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Hotline	256-7028
	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	366-0555
National Organization for Women (Tennessee)	Elizabeth Jamison, <i>President</i>	
	Box 120523, Nashville 37212	
Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA)		
	Box 24181, Nashville 37212	
Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Task Force (TGLTF)	Carole Cunningham, <i>President</i>	
	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	<i>Attorney</i>	227-3958
Irene K. Ratner, EdD	<i>Psychologist</i>	
	Suite 234 B, 4004 Hillsboro Rd	298-5369
RELIGIOUS		
Metropolitan Community Church	Rev Paul Tucker, <i>Pastor</i>	
	131 15th Av North	320-0288

Health Department To Trace Contacts

By STUART BIVIN
Editor

Tennessee Department of Health and Environment Commissioner James Word has announced a program designed to trace sexual contacts and those who have shared needles with people who have tested

positive for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Department employees have been directed to begin the contact-tracing program in order to warn the contacts that they are at risk for AIDS.

Word told the Nashville *Banner* last week

that "We will do everything we can to actively get the names" although those who test seropositive cannot be forced to reveal the names of their contacts.

The new program is designed to bring Tennessee into compliance with federal Centers for Disease Control requirements that states receiving CDC funding implement contact-tracing programs.

Tennessee received approximately \$900,000 from CDC last year for AIDS education, counseling, testing and services.

Although no record is kept of how many Tennesseans are tested for the virus each year, there are an estimated 15,000 Tennesseans who carry the virus.

John Fortune, coordinator of Tennessee's AIDS notification and counseling program, is optimistic about the program's chances for success.

"These are people who are at extremely increased risk, and they need to know about it," Fortune said.

Although those who test positive at the state's 13 public health centers will be asked about their contacts, no lists will be kept of those contacts.

Instead, Fortune explained, detailed information about the contacts will be gathered from the client and the contacts will be notified by a trained counselor who will urge them to come to the center for testing and counseling.

All information about the contact will be destroyed once counselors have communicated with the contact.

For those who worry about confidentiality, Fortune offered anonymity. He said that health workers will meet contacts wherever it is most convenient for the contact, such as at home or on the contact's break at his or her workplace, without ever learning the contact's name.

The state health department offers free and anonymous testing at Lentz Public Health Center, 311 23rd Avenue North, 327-9313.

Mayron, Adams Make Movies

Continued from Page 1

comedy heyday. The independent production, which went into pre-production in March, 1987, went into wide release last Friday across the country. So far, the reviews have been favorable, although the lofty New York *Times* pronounced it "more feminine than feminist."

That remark was laughed off by both Mayron and Adams.

"I think it's ridiculous," Mayron said. "People seem to think that to be feminist, you have to make a strong, heavy statement. The best way to make a point is to entertain first, then sneak your message in."

Adams agreed: "The whole feminist culture has lost its sense of humor."

"We're post-feminists," Mayron suggested.

The two point to the fact the film was written by two women, co-produced by two women and directed by a woman.

What was it like to be directed by a woman? "Well, let's put it this way. I wouldn't

ask Costa-Gavras for a tampon," Mayron answered.

"It's a dream come true for us," Mayron said. "We came up with the idea five years ago and it's taken us this long to get the financing and to film the project."

And for Adams, directing her first feature film after a successful career as an actress and a television director provided her with "an exhilarating, exhausting, difficult" experience that "changed my life."

Would she do it again? You better believe it. Mayron and Adams have another project in the works pending financial backing.

The interview is cut short by still more fans asking for autographs and complimenting Mayron on her role in the hit ABC television series *thirtysomething*.

Adams points out to yet another fan that "these are 100% cotton shirts" and they listen excitedly as two people proclaim *Sticky Fingers* a "great movie."

A "great movie" to go along with "great" hair, clothes and glasses - these two could be on to something.

Briefs

Mother Teresa to Memphis

Nobel laureate Mother Teresa is expected to set up a Memphis mission for AIDS sufferers or homeless mothers and children, according to the Rev. Pete Sartain, chancellor of the Catholic Diocese of Memphis.

Sartain said nuns from the Missionaries of Charity order founded by Mother Teresa will run the proposed mission.

"They do the kind of work that not everyone is attracted to," Sartain said. "It's very humble work, very simple and it's with the sickest of the sick and the poorest of the poor."

Memphis Bishop Daniel M. Buechlein has been corresponding with Mother Teresa for more than a year in hopes of interesting her in working in Tennessee. Last week Buechlein received a letter from Mother Teresa saying she would coming to Memphis soon.

Government AIDS Booklet

Every American household will soon receive a historic pamphlet with explicit advice on how to avoid AIDS, including the use of condoms.

Health and Human Services Secretary Otis R. Bown said the \$17 million undertaking represented "the first time the federal government has attempted to contact virtually every resident, directly by mail, regarding a public health crisis."

Surgeon General C. Everett Koop was asked to play a leading role in the project because, Bowen said, "Americans know and have faith in the health advisories of the surgeon general, and that trust will help ensure the success of this effort."

The eight page booklet, which contains explicit language, will start appearing in mailboxes the week of May 26. A series of promotional spots will begin airing on television prior to the mailing.

Representative Dyson Says He's Not Gay

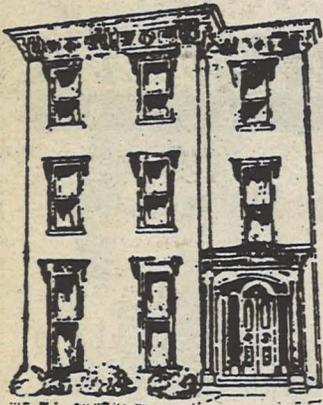
Maryland Congressman Roy Dyson last week firmly denied he is a homosexual, following the apparent suicide of his top aide, Tom Pappas.

Dyson told reporters at a news conference that he thinks Pappas committed suicide because he believed his reputation would be destroyed by a Washington *Post* news story. Dyson denied allegations that Pappas was also gay.

The story in the *Post* reported that Pappas imposed unorthodox demands on young male staffers, requiring them to attend social functions, asking one to perform a strip tease at a staff retreat and firing another for leaving a cocktail party early.

Pappas, Dyson's administrative aide throughout his political career, died in a fall from the 24th floor of a New York hotel Sunday, May 1.

The Maryland Democrat said he and Pappas "were very good friends. He was like a brother. We had a personal and professional relationship."



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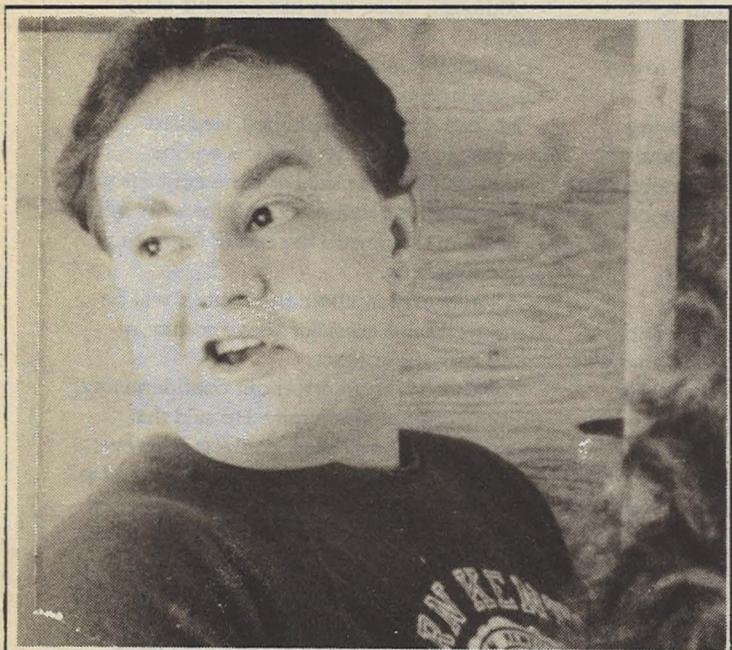


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Men in Dresses: Doing Drag in Nashville



Tim Reed



Carmella Marcella Garcia

By **SHERRE DRYDEN**
Book Editor

There's drag and then there's drag.—Tim Reed, Nashville drag performer Carmella Marcella Garcia

Bobbie Phillips, 34, was a drag performer in the past but now performs only occasionally. He decided he couldn't make enough money as a drag performer to support himself as well as he wished and couldn't see himself performing all of his life, so he developed a "straight" career.

Phillips prefers to dress in women's clothes. He wears men's clothes at work because he has to but changes into women's clothes at home. Whether relaxing or going out, Phillips says he feels more comfortable in women's clothes.

Fearing that they might find him less attractive as a man than as a woman, Phillips also prefers for gay people to meet him first in drag. After they get to know the "real"

Bobbie Phillips, he will let them see him out of drag.

Asked why he feels more comfortable in women's clothes, Phillips says, "Inside I think like a female. I have the emotions of a female." He associates women's clothing with traditional feminine characteristics, like sensitivity and thoughtfulness.

Phillips is dismayed that drag queens are not always welcomed by the gay community. "Queens are stigmatized, set aside until the time comes to make money. It's hard enough to handle straight society, but when your own people turn against you, use you...They should let each person judge their lives for themselves."

Instead of politics, Phillips attributes this stigmatization to jealousy: "The macho men are afraid of the competition...I feel like all gay men wonder at some time what it's like to be a woman—they're envious of you because you're popular, pretty."

He's also disturbed that some bar operators will not allow customers to wear drag. He admits drag queens do solicit drinks and sex—the main reason owners give for prohibiting customers in drag—but says each person should be judged individually.

He equates drag with other types of costumes that are permitted: "They're saying that women dressed in men's clothes are ok, cowboys are ok, leather men are ok, but you [drag queens] can't come in because you're dressed like a female."

Phillips says drag performers have the same motivation he does: popularity. "Many would do it for free just for the applause and glamour and glory. It's something that's inside of them."

As to women who find drag demeaning: "They should just stay away. They don't have to watch."

Tim Reed, who performs as Carmella Marcella Garcia, is one of only a handful of

performers in Nashville to work full time as a female impersonator.

Reed sees himself as an entertainer. Carmella is just a role, like any other performer's role. After the performance, he dresses in men's clothes. He has no desire to wear women's clothes in private life.

Bar owners do prohibit customers from coming in drag, Reed says, as an attempt to eliminate hustling and soliciting. Although not in Nashville, in some cities it is assumed that anyone in drag—performer or not—is a prostitute.

Reed is pleased to be able to use his talent to help gay causes and is proud that drag performers have raised so much money for AIDS research and education. He says he doesn't feel taken advantage of but he expects something in return from the gay community. "When it comes time for my own fund raising [for pageants, etc.] I expect support in return and I'm not hesitant to ask for it."

Reed rejects the idea that drag itself is demeaning to women. He sees the desire by some gay activists to suppress drag as a prejudice from within the gay community. He finds this division in the ranks damaging to the struggle for gay rights.

Although they haven't seen him perform, Reed's family knows how he makes his living. He says his mother is becoming more comfortable with his occupation every day.

Any parting tips for our readers? "Cover Girl doesn't cover boy."

Methodists Say Homosexuals Unwelcome

By **JEFF ELLIS**
News Editor

United Methodists last week slammed the church doors on gay men and lesbians seeking ordination by the Protestant denomination.

By a 69% to 31% margin, delegates to the United Methodist General Conference last week in St. Louis soundly defeated moves to authorize the ordination of gay men and lesbians as ministers.

Delegates also reasserted that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching" by an even larger vote margin - 80% to 20%.

Voting on the homosexuality issues opened the General Conference's second week of meetings. The 996 delegates considered other issues, including establishing a college in Zimbabwe, during the two week-long conference.

Tennessee's 10 delegates all voted in favor of the bans on homosexuals in the ministry.

Despite pleas from spokespeople for the unofficial gay caucus of the denomination, delegates delivered a resounding "No" to homosexual issues.

Delegates to the General Conference had

received some 700 petitions, containing 10,000 signatures, urging retention of the gay ban. Only 12 petitions to ease the ban were considered.

One delegate, an attorney, warned others that current church regulations against gay ordination are a "legal nightmare" that do

not provide due process for those accused of being "practicing self-avowed homosexuals."

In reaffirming the denomination's belief that homosexuality is "incompatible" with Christian teachings, the delegates also said, "We affirm that God's grace is available to all."

Chez Colette

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Reunion: A Family Comes to Terms With AIDS

Last in a five-part series

By **JEFF ELLIS**
News Editor

When you're five years old and the youngest child in a family of seven children, chances are you don't want to give up the spotlight.

But that is exactly what I had to do when my sister Stella gave birth to my nephew, Jamie.

To be honest, being called an uncle at so young an age was a pretty heady experience for me. Not even in school yet and I was an uncle - I thought I was more special than ever before. But I couldn't figure out how to keep my parents and other brothers and sisters from cooing over and cuddling the new bundle of joy.

I admit it. I was jealous.

But then as we grew up, Jamie and I became very close friends - closer than I was to my own brothers, who were all much older than me. They had each other to grow up with.

But I had Jamie to play with and to fight with. Not that we fought in the sense most little boys fight with each other - it was more like Krystle and Alexis.

During the past 25 years, we've changed a great deal but what has remained constant has been the strong sense of family loyalty with which we were raised.

Now that we know Jamie has AIDS, that loyalty has been tested and made stronger. We've gone from utter hopelessness to a life filled with great hope.

"It's amazing," Jamie says. "I feel so good now. You should see me, Uncle Jeff. You wouldn't believe how dark my tan is. I can't wait to go to Beverly Hills next month. I was just unpacking from a trip to Key West."

When he starts talking, you better watch out - Jamie loves to talk. During a recent telephone conversation, we talked about all sorts of things, from his treatment to his sense of self.

Last November, Jamie was finally approved for treatment with AZT, the so-called wonder drug that helps some AIDS patients. Doctors have told him that he may go for "seven or eight months with no outward signs of the disease" thanks to the drug, Retrovir.

"I had one seizure soon after starting the drug. The doctors took me off it for a while," he says. "Now my dosage is cut in half because I had to have more blood transfusions because the AZT was making me anemic."

The AZT treatment follows a regimen of holistic treatments Jamie tried in order to keep the disease at bay. He tried crystals. He tried yoga.

But the yoga proved to be too difficult for him: "It was too hard on me because I had lost so much weight and it hurt me to try it."

Now at a trim 150 pounds, when I visited him last November he weighed only 89 pounds. Because of the rapid weight loss, he had lost much of his hair and his ribs were evident even under his clothes.

Now by the sound of his voice alone you can tell his health is improved. And so is his outlook.



Jamie McMaban, doing what he does best.

"I try to keep my mind occupied all the time. I do needlepoint and swim when the weather's good," Jamie reports. "And my friends, Lauren and Steve, always come by when I need someone to lift my spirits."

"Of course, Scottie's here so we get to fight and laugh about things we did when we were kids."

"And Lee is wonderful. He is my 'soul' support. If not for him, I'd probably be dead."

There are times when he forgets to keep his mind occupied and he thinks about "it" - death.

"Sometimes I'm watching TV or maybe I hear a song and it starts me thinking. I try not to think about it, but sometimes I just can't help it. So I get depressed and cry."

"But I'm very hopeful. Anything could

happen. They could find a cure any day now.

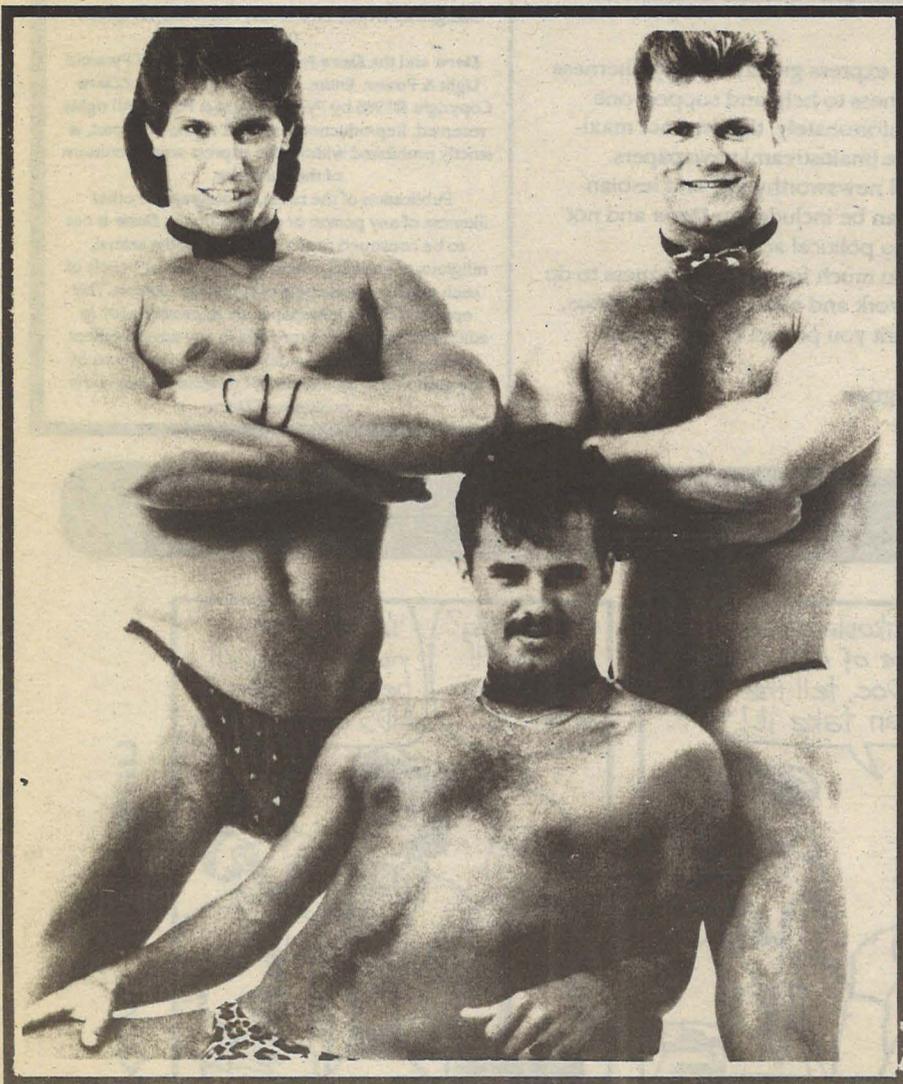
"And I can't wait to go to California to see my friend, Tom. Lee's going to take his vacation then so he can come. I hope we see lots of celebrities while we're there. You know, I saw Whoopi Goldberg on my last trip."

Jamie loves to talk, but every conversation must end, and when we say goodbye I always wonder if I'll get to talk to him again - or to see him again.

I'm always a little sad after talking to Jamie, so Stuart will give me a hug and I'll feel my eyes start to burn. I'll cry for a couple of minutes and then go on about the business of the day.

I wait and I hope.

And so does Jamie.



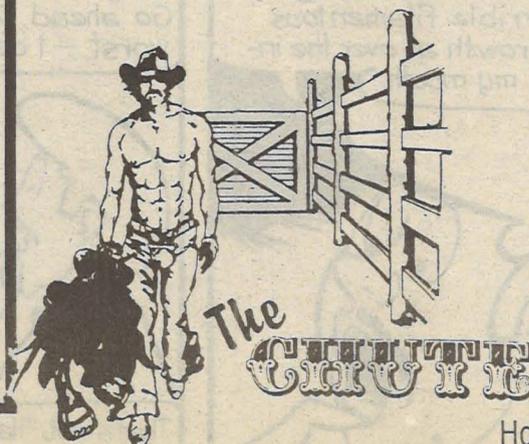
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Between the Lines

Thanks for Getting to Know My Family

By **JEFF ELLIS**
News Editor

Several weeks ago, during a staff meeting, we began to discuss various story ideas.

Only a few weeks earlier, my mother had been told that my nephew Jamie had been diagnosed as having AIDS. Her reaction, and the effect of Jamie's illness on my family, had the makings of a good feature story, I felt.

But that one story ended up being five stories. And in the process of writing the series "Reunion: A Family Comes to Terms with AIDS," I was forced to examine my own

feelings about Jamie, AIDS and my family.

I worried initially, that the series would be considered too personal by some people. But my family is pretty much like everyone else's, I think. We love one another, but there are times we don't like one another very much. We're scattered all over the country, so we don't talk to one another all the time, but we're still very close-knit. AIDS is a disease that affects not only the person who has it, but everyone around him. That's why I wanted to write the story, to share my personal point of view of those effects.

It's been very difficult. Since Jamie told me

he was sick, I had tried not to think about it. It's very frightening to be told someone you love may die. The time had come, however, that I had to consider the consequences. I had to face my own fears and prejudices, just like everyone else.

Frankly, I cried every time I sat down to write an installment of the series. I cried because I hate to see my mother's anguish and worry. I cried because I couldn't understand my sister's reaction to her child's predicament. And I cried because Jamie may die.

It was a gut-wrenching, emotionally

draining experience. But it has made me stronger and more aware, I believe.

It is my hope that you've enjoyed reading "Reunion" and that you were touched by it. I firmly believe it is the role of the press to provide a forum for the expression of ideas and thoughts - whether they be personal or universal.

Thank you for getting to know my family.

A Mother's Mother's Day Message

By **CURT FOLTS**
Staff Writer

This being the week after Mother's Day, I asked my Mom to write to me and the Nashville gay and lesbian community through *Dare*. I wanted her feelings on being a parent of a homosexual. I received the following:

"Dear Curt,

"You asked me to put in writing the feelings of a parent whose child chooses a homosexual lifestyle. I can only give my own point of view, but here goes.

"First, I raised my children to have the

freedom of thought and the ability to make their own decisions. If you lived a standard straight lifestyle just because "society" expected it, you would not be happy feeling as you do. Above all I think parents want their children to be happy and productive. I know you have a lot of talent for writing. This will certainly grow and progress if you are happy and that will give you the career you want.

"I am glad you have found a gentle, loving person to share your life with. I know you have these caring qualities and you could not be satisfied for long with someone who didn't. Of course, being the unofficial

humane society annex, I appreciate the fact that you both love animals.

"I think you've chosen a road with difficulties to come (I'm speaking of the group of you). However, an easy road is not the answer to a feeling of satisfaction. If you believe in something - stand for it.

"All my love to you and yours, and to your friends I haven't met I say: "Trust your parents, they love you." If not, it is so sadly their loss.

"Good luck with the new paper.

"Love, Mom"

That's my Mom.

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, double-spaced 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.

Dear *Dare*,

Should you include an article concerning the vandalism of Pastor Tucker's home, I hope you include the information concerning

the community spirit which his friends expressed in counteracting the evil done to him.

When the [Metropolitan Community Church] District Conference meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, heard of the incidents, a considerable amount of funds were personally given to him. Locally, friends arrived at his home Sunday and spent hours cleaning and preparing the site for renovation. I understand also he has received many calls of support and promised gifts.

To me, the feelings and actions of our

community express greatly our togetherness and willingness to help and support one another. Unfortunately, this was not maximized in the [mainstream] newspapers.

I hope all newsworthy gay and lesbian activities can be included in *Dare* and not be limited to political activism.

Thanks so much for your willingness to do this good work and especially the gracious, friendly spirit you project to everyone.

J.D. Gregory
Nashville

Dare

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From the Heart of the American South

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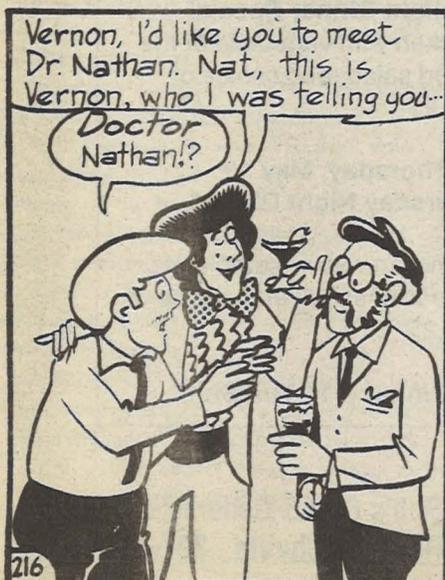
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Murphy's Manor™



by Kurt Erichsen

Pride Profiles

Bessie Smith: Chattanooga's Empress of the Blues

By **SHERRE DRYDEN**
Book Editor

Bessie Smith was unquestionably the greatest of the blues singers. Born in poverty in Chattanooga, by age 30 she was the highest-paid black performer of her time.

She was also a lesbian.

At the age of nine, Smith was already singing on the streets of Chattanooga for nickels and dimes and reportedly made her singing debut at Chattanooga's Ivory Theatre. At some point, perhaps as early as 1910, she joined blues singer Gertrude "Ma" Rainey's traveling show.

Rainey's songs explicitly stated her preference for women, leaving no question that she was willing to be open about being a lesbian. Although Smith denied that she and Rainey had a sexual relationship, it is likely that they were lovers.

For the next few years Smith traveled the south with carnivals and minstrel shows, sang in waterfront dives and cabarets and later appeared on the black vaudeville circuit in the ghettos of Atlanta, Birmingham and Memphis. She toured with the Florida Cotton Pickers and her own Liberty Belles until pianist Clarence Williams took her to New York.

About 1920 she married Earl Love, who died shortly afterward. Three years later she married John Gee, a Philadelphia police officer who resigned to become her manager. The marriage was stormy with frequent public fights and scenes. In 1926, the couple adopted a relative of one of the women in

Smith's troupe, naming him Jack Gee, Jr. In 1930 Smith and Gee separated.

Although Smith probably made a record in 1921, it was never released, and her real career as a recording artist began in 1923 with *Downhearted Blues*. After signing an exclusive contract with Columbia (her records reportedly saved Columbia from bankruptcy) she recorded regularly until 1928, with some records selling 100,000 copies a week.

"The Empress of the Blues" dressed strikingly, sometimes wearing a regal headdress and white satin gown, dramatized by shifting colored spotlights. She played largely to black audiences, singing of poverty, sex, joy, and grief. In 1929 she appeared in *St. Louis Blues*, a tough, ironic film banned for its realism.

Her popularity declined as increasing alcoholism made her an unreliable performer. When the Depression led to an end of the craze for the blues, she was dropped by Columbia. Plunged back into poverty, she returned to performing in road shows and night clubs.

A last recording session in 1933 combined her talents with those of some of the best swing musicians, and by 1937 she had begun to attract the attention of white audiences. She hoped to make a comeback, but died before her next recording session.

Some accounts describe a rough, violent woman who drank excessively, recklessly squandered her money and became involved in numerous fights. She got drunk at a



Bessie Smith

reception given by Carl Van Vechten and flattened his wife Fania in full view of the other guests.

When Gee caught her with one of the women from her troupe, he chased them through the hotel. They hid and when Gee ran down the street thinking the women had escaped, Smith's whole troupe ran for the train depot. Still in pajamas, they quietly slipped out of town.

Others who knew her recalled a kind and generous Bessie Smith who once cancelled her engagements to take over housekeeping duties so her business manager's wife could nurse their seriously ill son. She often handed out cash to strangers and attended church whenever she could.

Smith died in an automobile accident near Clarksdale, Mississippi. An account was circulated that she died because a white

hospital refused to accept her, a legend strengthened by Edward Albee's play *The Death of Bessie Smith*.

Actually, she was taken directly to the black hospital in Clarksdale after a Memphis physician who happened upon the accident provided emergency treatment. She probably died of internal injuries soon after arrival at the hospital. Her grave remained unmarked until Janis Joplin and a Philadelphia nurse, Juanita Green, provided a headstone in 1970.

Louis Armstrong said, "She used to thrill me at all times, the way she could phrase a note with a certain something in her voice no other blues singer could get. She had music in her soul and felt everything she did."

"She was the best blues singer there was," remembered clarinetist Sidney Bechet, "but that trouble was inside her and it wouldn't let her rest."

Pages

"The Crone": "Hag" is a Compliment

The Crone, Barbara G. Walker. (Harper & Row, 1985) 191 pp. \$8.95.

By **ROBYN KEVLIN**
Special to Dare

Ageism. Matriarchy. War. Heavy subjects, but Barbara Walker handles them and others with insight and finesse. *The Crone* is a thought-provoking book that studies the basis of our culture's aversion to aging, women's relegation to substandard citizenship, and men's need to dominate other men

through political and monetary power plays.

Walker delved into the five-century-long Inquisition during which the Church tried to stamp out the old religions based on matriarchal rule. More than nine million people were put to death in God's name - 80% of them women who were linked, if only by the shape of their skin, to the Great Mother.

Several bits of trivia surfaced in reading *The Crone*:

- "Hag" originally meant "holy one," from

the Greek for "saint"

- "Uni" was a pre-Roman form of the Goddess, and was the Mother of the Universe

- "Mathematics" originally meant "mother-wisdom"

- "Christ" was a Hebrew-Essene word meaning "head of the congregation" and was a common title

The Crone is chock-full of tidbits that will make you sit up and take notice. I'll leave you with this one:

The old woman represents the kind of death that our culture wishes to conceal: death after slow degeneration of body and mind. The kind of death our civilization encourages us to contemplate instead, as "entertainment," is the sudden violent kind, in keeping with its ideals of conflict and aggression. As spectacle, violent death is safe. No matter how dangerous our environment, we seldom believe it will happen to us. Old people are a constant reminder of our own mortality.

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