

FROM THE HEART OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Dare

FREE

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 22

THE GAY AND LESBIAN NEWSPAPER

AUGUST 19-25, 1988



Robert Bray and Jack Ben-Levi participate rather enthusiastically in ACT UP's kiss-in at the Republican National Convention in New Orleans. Bray, of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, and Ben-Levi, of New York's ACT UP, participated in the kiss-in to protest the federal government's AIDS and human rights policies. Deborah Burks tells what it was like to be there, page 6

Nashville Mayor Boner Meets Lesbian/Gay Leaders

By JEFF ELLIS
Managing Editor

Seeking answers to a myriad of questions - ranging from the proposed site for a Metro landfill to the reluctance of the administration to issue a proclamation for Pride Week '88 - Nashville citizens participated in the first "The Mayor's Night In" Tuesday.

Local lesbian and gay activists came away from the brief meetings with Mayor Bill Boner and his staff with promises of a Sept. 7 meeting to iron out any misunderstandings that may exist as a result of perceived differences of opinion.

Deborah Burks, head of Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA), called the Mayor's agreement to the meeting "a definite step forward."

Boner conceded during the meetings with local activists that his "staff dropped the ball" during discussions in June regarding a proposed mayoral proclamation for Pride Week '88 festivities.

"To be honest with you, I just heard about this a couple of weeks ago," Boner said. "If I had known in June, it would have been handled differently."

Boner assured his lesbian and gay constituents that in the future if an issue arises which is deemed "too hot to handle, we'll tell you it's too hot to handle."

"If I tell you I'm in favor of something, then

that's exactly what I mean. I learned a long time ago that as long as you are honest - even if that means saying no when saying yes would be much easier - people will appreciate it more," the Mayor said.

Boner further suggested he would be willing to have periodic meetings with local lesbian and gay leaders if such meetings are essential.

Metro Health Director Dr. Fredia Wadley, addressing the question of local government's funding for AIDS services and education, urged the activists to begin lobbying members of the Metro Council for that funding.

"When the budget hearings start, you're going to come up against people who are well-prepared," she warned. "When you're asking for \$250,000, you must be prepared to give hard facts and evidence of what you propose to do with that money."

David Rader, aide to the Mayor, lauded efforts by members of the local arts community to secure Metro funding as an example of strong lobbying efforts.

Wadley pointed to education and service programs currently administered by the Metro Health Department as a sign of the current administration's commitment to the AIDS battle.

Boner, alluding to his Congressional record on AIDS funding, pledged his full support

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Gay/Les Activists Face Republicans

Hope to Raise Awareness of Human Rights, AIDS Issues

By CAROLE CUNNINGHAM
Staff Writer

NEW ORLEANS - Gay and lesbian activists this week from Los Angeles and New York, Boston and Nashville, marched through the streets of New Orleans and into the halls of the Republican National Convention with a clear message: "We will not shut up. We will not give up. And we will not go away," a rallying cry coined by Sue Hyde of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) in response to an attack on AIDS activists by Party members.

Unlike the Democratic National Convention held in Atlanta in July where gay/lesbian delegates hammered out lists of demands for the Democratic platform and lobbied for inclusion of the words "gay" and "lesbian" in nomination acceptance speeches, gay and lesbian activists in New Orleans had no compatriots "inside" the Louisiana Superdome. Instead, Gay/Lesbian VOICE '88, a national coalition organized by NGLTF, the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) and Gay and Lesbian Democrats of America (GLDA) began waging a week-long campaign of vigils, demonstrations, speak-outs, kiss-ins and marches, hoping to focus both the public and the American eye on gay and

Nelson Says No Confidentiality for Gov't Workers

By JEFF ELLIS
Managing Editor

Under Tennessee's open records law, employees of state or local government can not be guaranteed complete confidentiality of HIV test results, according to Matt Nelson, AIDS Education Coordinator for the Tennessee Department of Health and Environment.

Nelson's comments came this week in reaction to a report in last week's *Dare* that Metro School System employees who test positive for the HIV virus may face suspension or termination from their jobs.

The Metro Board of Education last week revised its AIDS policy in order to comply with recently adopted state guidelines. Charles Frazier, director of schools, warned that while students who are tested for HIV-infection will be guaranteed confidentiality, teachers and staff members will not be given such

Continued on page 3

lesbian issues and the need for increased funding for AIDS research and services.

Statements issued by G/L VOICE '88 from their New Orleans Radisson Hotel headquarters, expressed disappointment and outrage that the Republican Party Platform Committee ignored an amendment by Senator Lowell Weicker calling for an endorsement of the President's AIDS Commission's recommendations.

Organizers called "deplorable" the Committee's rejection of the Commission's findings and recommendations and called the draft platform's claim that "the Reagan/Bush Administration launched the nation's fight against AIDS" nothing more than "election year hyperbole."

The Platform's reference to AIDS education efforts was also viewed by VOICE '88 as "head in the sand philosophy." The platform calls for "abstinence from drug abuse and sexual activity outside of marriage" to be the primary AIDS education message.

VOICE '88 Saturday night sponsored "A Night of Light and Love," a candlelight ceremony for those who have died of AIDS or have been diagnosed. Held in Armstrong Park, activists floated 356 Chinese lanterns on the park's lake in honor of the 356 people who would be diagnosed with AIDS during the days of the Republican Convention.

New Orleans Mayor Sydney Barthelemy delivered the opening speech, and was followed by Peter Staley of PWARC, ACT UP/ New York, a former Wall Street stockbroker who walked out of his job after seeing 100 AIDS activists at a sit-in on Wall Street.

Staley condemned the Republicans for
Continued on page 4

INSIDE

Deborah Burks on passion and politics, page 6.

Frank Ashe goes to Boys' Town, page 7.

Sociables

On the Road, On the Town and Onstage

By **JAAN STURGIS**
Staff Writer

While the rest of us were suffering from the tedium of a long, hot, dull Nashville summer, the "prominent" (?) state AIDS education coordinator Matt Nelson was away to the Northeast – first to Boston and then to every gay man's dream: Provincetown.

The real purpose of the get-away was to attend the Second International Gay and Lesbian Health Care Conference in Boston. The conference was an amalgam of politics and health care issues. As the only representative from Tennessee, Matt carried the banner of L/G health care high and proud!

But...the rest of this trip was spent in that divine paradise Provincetown, which Matt called a "fairy" village right out of the 1700s – with a wonderful eclectic grouping of people. Specialty shops abounded, ranging from hand-made jewelry to fabulous paintings, *avant-garde* clothing and leather goods (hmmm).

Matt reported that the pubs close early there and everyone gathers at the Pizza Hut Spiritus from 1:00 to 2:00 am and the mixture of people – from queens to men in leather to a handful of heterosexuals – is, shall we say, festive.

The first night was a particularly romantic one as this sampling of humankind watched the fog encompass this New England village. To top off his trip, Matt saw the road company perform the show *Nunsense* in Boston and just hooted and howled about how grand and glorious it was. Guess I'll have to see it when it comes here.

And who planned this wonderful excursion for him? Sharon and Laurie (Mr.) of Fresh Pond Travel in Sudbury, Massachusetts. They even met Matt when he returned to Boston and spent a night chatting and discoursing at one of the gay pubs. Matt says you can talk to them at 1-800-338-1763.

And speaking of travel plans, Tery Ralston told me that one of our good friends in Atlanta (who has been seen in Nashville on numerous occasions), Loyal Charles, sent him a pamphlet from RSVP 1989 Cruises. RSVP is a company specializing in lesbian and gay cruises. My... what a luscious little booklet! I'm trying to make up my mind whether it would be better to take my vacation in February and go to New Orleans, Key West, Playa del Carmen and Cozumel, or wait until late March and go to the San Diego area. Perhaps it would be better to wait 'til fall and go on a three-day junket to Miami, Key West and Dry Tortugas during which you can participate in Fantasy Fest (Key West's fabulous Halloween) – a real Mardi Gras-type parade and street party climax (!) the event.

For the adventurous at heart, and those of us with a penchant for Europe, especially Italy, go with RSVP in late July to such ports as Nice and Venice. Oh, I'm breathless at the thought of all those bodies! Give Loyal a call at 1-800-451-7986 and he'll fix you up – on a cruise, that is.

And, of course, the lovely and breathtakingly efficient Martha Boyd has specialized for years in making travel arrangements for the lesbian and gay community in Nashville. Rumor has it that she, too, has an RSVP connec-

tion. You heard it here first.

You can reach her at 383-1870. Martha says that she has all *kinds* of vacation ideas, and she can make any special arrangements you'd like. She's even planning some special lesbian/gay vacation packages of her own.

MCC-Nashville will once again challenge the Crisis Center to a softball game on August 27th at 9 am at the little diamond across from Centennial Park. Although they have enough players, cheerleaders and equipment – particularly gloves (no, dearie, not your all-cotton ones) – are needed. Come out and join the fun!

Oh, dearhearts, it's a party! Pat Applegate told me that I should watch my mailbox because she's throwing a big blowout barbecue for her 33rd birthday on August 28th. I guess it's more than just a b-day affair because she's billing it as a multi-purpose get-together.

Pat's celebrating her recent divorce (hope she made the divorce party at Bob's Crazy Cowboy), her new roommate, her new car and her unemployment. What a celebration this should be! Watch for the mail woman/man. She/he may have just what you're looking for!

Oh, and on August 27th T-GALA (Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance) is having their big raffle where some lucky person will win the GRAND prize of a car. If you haven't gotten your raffle ticket for this or one of the 40+ other yummy prizes, why not see a T-GALA member or phone Scott Osten, 269-4283, or Terry Kevlin, 333-2215? You, too, can be a winner!

Did you miss the party of the mid-summer social season at Devie Levin and Penny Campbell's house a couple of Sunday nights ago for the Sharon Kowalski barbecue and birthday party?

About 60 people attended the event. All those partygoers motorcaded downtown to Legislative Plaza where Carole Cunningham, Murfreesboro's Marie (J.R.) Jernigan, Gary Bellamy and *Dare's* social-climbing publisher Stuart Bivin spoke to the 65 or so there, between musical sets by Marianne Osiel, Kat Graham and Lisa Roberson. The event raised over \$170 for the Kowalski Legal Defense Fund. Success! Success!

Tomorrow night ought to be fun. Triple Play, code for Trent Ates, Gregory Tennison-fisher and Gerrit Wilson, will perform at the Gas Lite. The three will be doing solo, duet and trio work, and rumor has it, well, okay, Trent told us, that Marianne Osiel and Kat Graham may pop in for some vocal fun themselves.

The 27th will mark another worthy event when the Nashville Voters Coalition kicks off Super Saturday, a city-wide voter-registration drive. They have made a commitment to help register those who have traditionally been excluded or underrepresented in the electoral process – including a specific commitment to register lesbians and gay men. If you're not registered, or if you'd like to join in the fun Super Saturday, why not call Paul Slentz for more info at 244-4353?

Have you flown off to Maine, New Hampshire, or Vermont – or just flown the coop? Let me know what you're up to. Call me: 226-4034 (evenings).

Well, that's *Sociables* for this time, dearhearts! See you next time!

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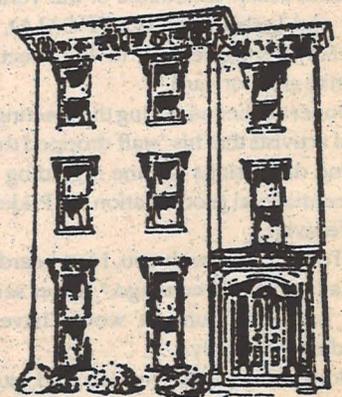
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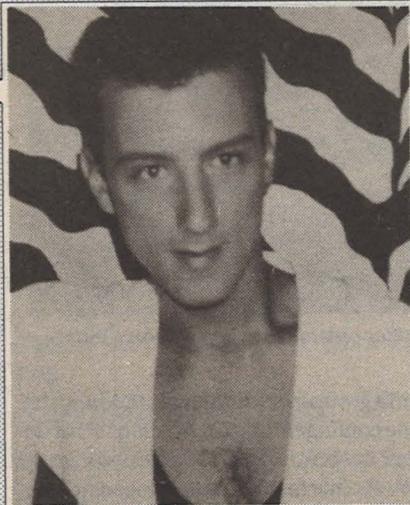


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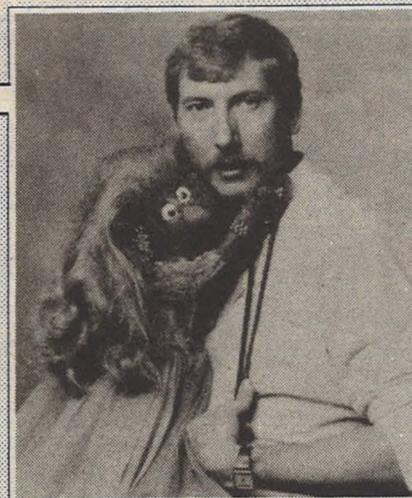
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Second Local Theatre Chain Says No to "Temptation"

By **JEFF ELLIS**
Managing Editor

Chances that a controversial film chronicling the career of Jesus Christ will be shown in Nashville grew fainter this week as a second local theatre chain decided to ban the film from its screens.

Consolidated Theatres Monday announced without comment that the Martin Scorsese-directed *Last Temptation of Christ* will not be exhibited in any of their theatres in five Southern states, including those here in Nashville.

Metro Councilmember Paul Koulakov said he would withdraw his resolution calling for the film's ban from Nashville screens.

The resolution, introduced at last week's Metro Council meeting, accomplished its intention of warning people about the movie, Koulakov said.

The decision by Consolidated to ban the film followed closely on the heels of a similar decision by Nashville's Carmike Cinemas. AMC, which operates the new 14-screen Fountain Square cinema, has not made its final decision regarding the film.

Although AMC officials have screened the

film, they have not been offered distribution rights by Universal Pictures. However, a spokesperson for AMC in Atlanta, said that it is unlikely that *Last Temptation* will play Nashville, regardless of any decision by AMC to screen the movie elsewhere.

The film, based on a 1955 novel by Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis, opened on ten screens in nine cities throughout the country last week, setting box office records for Universal Pictures.

Industry sources said that the movie's estimated \$440,000 box office take last weekend - which translates to some \$44,000 per screen - was the highest per screen take for any Universal film in history. Those record-setting box office receipts followed lukewarm reviews from critics and nationwide protests from fundamentalists decrying the film as "blasphemy."

The film chronicles Jesus's career leading to the crucifixion. It is on the cross that he endures his last temptation - a vision of life as a common man, married to former prostitute Mary Magdalene, the father of several children and living to old age.

...No confidentiality

Continued from page 1
 assurances.

According to Nelson, government employee records are subject to scrutiny by outsiders under the state's open records law.

"Anything in any school system employee's personnel record can be, on demand, made available to any citizen who wants to view it," Nelson said. "The school system can determine when the record may be viewed, but they cannot prevent anyone from viewing the records."

Nelson indicated that attorneys have challenged the law's validity, but to no avail.

"We don't know how to change that law short of an act of the state legislature," he said.

Metro school authorities made every effort to ensure the confidentiality of staff members who are tested, Nelson continued. Further, he said that under state guidelines suggested by the state AIDS commission, termination or suspension of persons who test positive for HIV is prohibited.

The some 120 school districts throughout the state have until Sept. 1 to submit their AIDS policies to the state board of education. Gwen Bailey, AIDS liaison for the state board, will review all of the local policies, Nelson said, and if they fail to adhere to state adopted guidelines, the policies will have to be changed to reflect compliance.

"Gwen Bailey will personally review every policy and any policy which contains a mention of termination or suspension will be rejected," Nelson said.

The threat of suspension or termination

came as a result of AIDS and HIV-infection being listed under the state's list of communicable diseases. State policy regarding communicable diseases says that anyone suffering from any of those illnesses listed may face termination or suspension.

"AIDS was listed under communicable diseases in state policy," Nelson said. "But based upon guidelines suggested by the state's AIDS commission, AIDS cannot be considered under the same criteria as other communicable diseases."

Lucille Nabors, assistant superintendent of schools in charge of curriculum and instructional services and the system's spokesperson on student AIDS policy, said that the policy adopted last week updated a policy adopted locally in February, 1987.

"We followed state guidelines in setting our local policy, dealing with each case on an individual basis," Nabors said.

She indicated there are "no known cases" of Metro school students with AIDS, but cases are expected.

Nabors said the only real change adopted by the school board last week calls for a state evaluation team to decide whether students suspected of having AIDS will be able to attend school or if alternative education methods are needed. Previously, a local evaluation board would have been empanelled to make the determination.

"The state board of education felt it would be to all school systems' advantage to have a centralized body to deal with the evaluation," Nabors said.

...Mayor meets leaders

Continued from page 1
 "in the fight against AIDS."

Starting at 5 p.m. and continuing until 9 p.m., more than 85 individuals or groups had signed up to visit with the Mayor, his staff and representatives of various Metro departments. Billy Fields, an assistant to Mayor Boner, said that the brief meetings with Boner would

continue until all of those in line by 9 p.m. had been met.

A decision by Metro Councilmember-at-Large George Armistead to withdraw his proposed landfill resolution may have diverted many of the expected questions about the landfill controversy, Fields said, and thereby reduced the crowd at the event.

...Activists at Republican Convention

Continued from page 1

their silence on the recommendations of the AIDS Commission and said no one must be deterred from using the "A-word" (AIDS) because "straight America is tired of AIDS."

Staley was joined by other speakers, including Urvashi Vaid of NGLTF; Barbara Cleaver, founder of Mothers of AIDS Patients; and Molly Yard, president of the National Organization for Women.

Nashville activists Penny Campbell, Diane Easter and Deborah Burks took part Sunday morning in a moving kiss-in from the Marriott Hotel to St. Louis Cathedral. Hyde and Vaid of NGLTF called the action a "demonstration of love and affection teaching us all that affectional relations between members of the same sex should never be the cause of fear or hatred."

Approximately 30 participants greeted Archbishop Phillip Hannon of the Diocese of New Orleans, with shouts asking him to use his influence to change the Catholic Church's condemnation of homosexuality and to increase the Church's assistance in the AIDS crisis.

The archbishop kept his back turned to the demonstrators who began to shout, "Shame! Shame!"

Activists continued chanting "Shame! Shame!" later in the day when 20 ACT UP activists entered the Municipal Convention

up. And we will not go away."

Mark Kostopolos, of ACT UP/Los Angeles and one of those arrested Sunday, concurred with Hyde's comments: "I'm not going to be intimidated by their hatred. I'm more scared of dying from AIDS than I am of what the Republicans are going to do to me."

Kostopolos, along with other VOICE '88 participants, staged a die-in Monday at New Orleans City Hall. Activists drew body outlines in chalk on the marble plaza in front of City Hall while the names of people who have died from AIDS were read over a loudspeaker.

The only disruption of the event occurred when a fundamentalist Christian bearing the sign, "Jesus Saves!" and shouted, "Comms go home! Homos go home! You sodomites deserve to pay for your sins!"

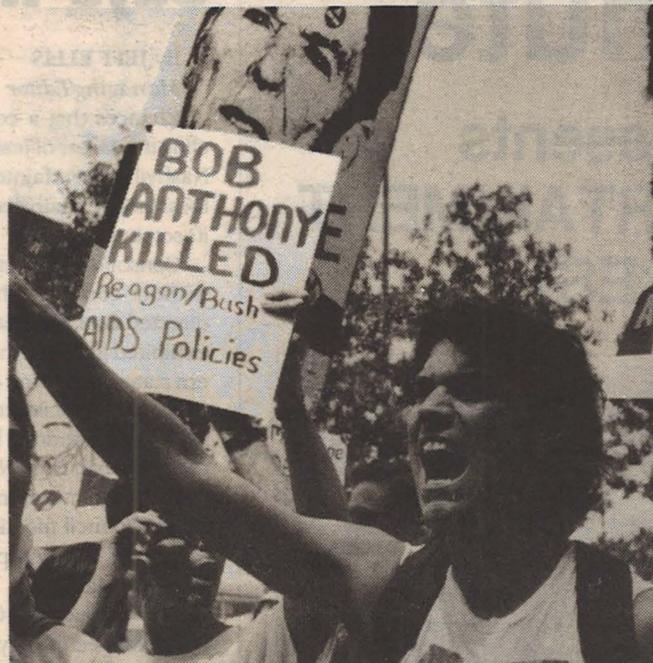
Organizers of the die-in reminded participants to ignore the man. The die-in ended with speeches from Sue Caves and Barbara Cleaver, two Republican women whose sons have died from AIDS. Cave and Cleaver were sponsored at the event by San Francisco's Mobilization Against AIDS.

The women have spoken out across the country for increased funding for AIDS services and for legislation protecting people with AIDS and those who are HIV-positive from discrimination. Caves criticized the Republican party and Reagan for "not taking a leadership role in helping families in the AIDS crisis." Caves said she and Cleaver were ready "to appeal to the

highest authority in this land: the American people." Cleaver, Caves and the die-in participants then marched to the entrance of the convention hall where the mothers were denied entrance to present their plea to the president.

Republican delegates leaving the convention center verbally harassed the demonstrators and police had to form a barrier between the angry delegates and the demonstrators holding pieces of an AIDS quilt and chanting "History will recall, Reagan did least of all."

Other related events at the convention included a march and rally by the National Organization for Women (NOW) Sunday afternoon called "Mardi Gras for Equality." While approximately 40-50 lesbians marched in the parade, there was no visible presence of lesbian issues in the form of either speeches or placards.



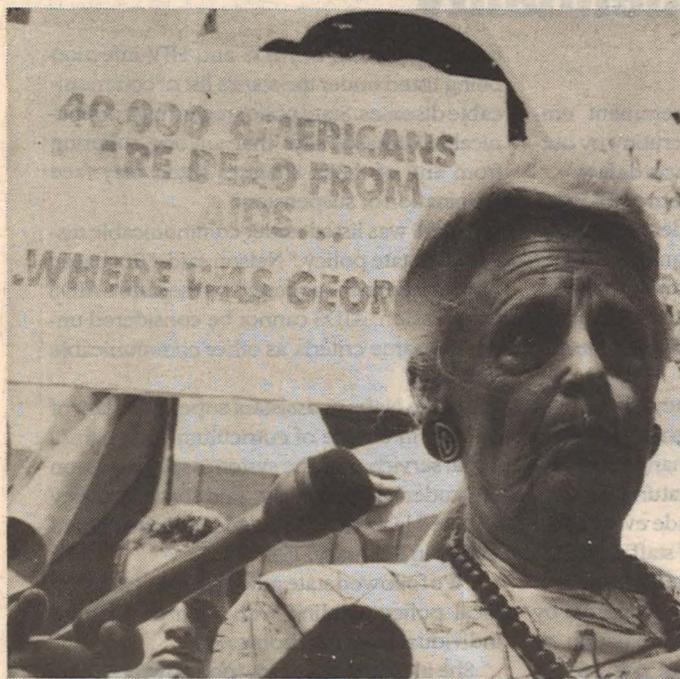
An unidentified man rallies outside the Convention Center.

When a group including Hyde, Vaid and the Nashville contingent began chanting "What do we want? Lesbian rights! When do we want 'em? Now!" other lesbians marching joined in, only to be quickly drowned out by the NOW women who began loudly shouting "What do we want? ERA!" NOW members' discomfort with a vocal lesbian presence was echoed silently in NOW president Molly Yard's rally speech that addressed nearly every NOW concern except gay and lesbian rights. When asked after the speech why she omitted gay and lesbian rights from her speech, Yard responded that she had attended the AIDS vigil the night before to show her support of those issues.

Nashville activist Burks called the violence of the Republican delegates "a real eye-opener. Sometimes I get naïve about what we're up against, but after that incident, I know what our job is, and I know I'm going back to Nashville to work my ass off to get Dukakis elected."



An unidentified protestor



Barbara Caves, of Mothers of AIDS Patients

Center during President Reagan's opening address, bearing slogans saying "Silence = Death" and "AIDSGATE" torn from their hands and shredded by angry Republican delegates.

Several activists were physically assaulted before Secret Service agents intervened. Beer was thrown at the protestors along with verbal epithets and threats. Five activists were arrested on charges of disturbing the peace.

VOICE '88 headquarters responded to the incident within minutes with press releases and a press conference. NGLTF's Hyde said, "The hostility of the rank-and-file [delegates] is a reflection of the hostility of the party. Their reception was shocking but not surprising."

G/L VOICE '88 demanded a repudiation of the violence and an apology from the party organizers. Neither demand has so far been met. Hyde assured the press and the Republicans that the incident would not deter the activist efforts: "We will not shut up. We will not give



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Dates

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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.

Tuesdays

Nashville CARES
HIV Education Support Groups. 7pm.

AI-Anon
Meeting, MCC. 6:30pm.

Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous
Closed meeting, MCC. 8pm.

Wednesdays

Nashville CARES
AIDS/ARC Support Group.
6:30pm

Nashville CARES
HIV/Chemical Dependency Support Group. 7pm. Info phone 385-1510.

Thursdays

Nashville CARES
AIDS/ARC Support Group.
5pm.

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

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

Fridays

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

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

Saturdays

Nashville CARES
AIDS/ARC Support Group.
4pm.

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

Sundays

Metropolitan Community Church-Antioch
Worship service, 11am. Info phone 833-8581 or 834-4491.

Metropolitan Community Church-Nashville
Worship services, 11am and 7pm.

SPECIAL Events

Tuesday, August 23

American Red Cross AIDS Education Workshop, Red Cross Headquarters, 2201 Charlotte Ave. 9am-3pm. Free. Info phone Betty Barrera, 327-8221.

Tuesday, August 23

Vanderbilt Lambda Association Meeting. For lesbian and gay Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff and alumni. 118 Sarratt Center, Vanderbilt. 6pm. Free.

Saturday, August 27

Vanderbilt Staff Council Sixth Annual Flea Market, to benefit the Vanderbilt Child Care Center. Natchez Trace at Vanderbilt Place and 25th Ave, across from the stadium. Booths available for \$10. 8am-5pm. Info phone 322-8240.

Saturday, August 27

Nashville Voters Coalition and Project Vote Super Saturday, voter registration drive. Meet at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, 900 James Robertson Parkway. Refreshments. 9:30am. Info phone Paul Slentz, 244-4353, or Shirletha Crawford, 329-0999.

Saturday, August 27

Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA) Raffle drawing. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1808 Woodmont Blvd. 7:30pm. Info phone 333-2215.

Saturday, August 27

Nashville Women's Alliance Coffeehouse. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1808 Woodmont Blvd. Follows T-GALA Raffle drawing. 8pm.



Your nonprofit event can be listed free in *Dates*. 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.

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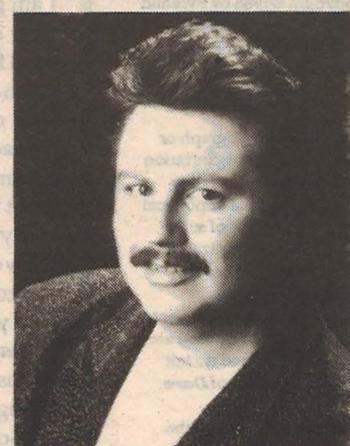
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Dare

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

August 19-25, 1988
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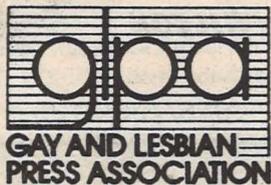
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Between the Lines

To Watch or to Act?

By DEBORAH BURKS
Staff Writer

For many years now (particularly the last eight), I have been aware of significant differences that exist between the philosophies of the Democrats and those of the Republicans.

I'm not speaking of their different approaches to balancing the federal budget or cleaning up the environment. I'm referring to differences in the way members and candidates of these two parties treat people and basic rights such as freedom of expression.

This past weekend at the Republican national convention in New Orleans, I, for the first time, experienced these differences.

Several of us ventured from Nashville to New Orleans to participate in the demonstration and visibility activities planned by Gay and Lesbian Voice '88 and ACT-UP. I also went as a reporter for *Dare*.

Having attended the Democratic Convention in Atlanta last month, it was immediately obvious that the atmosphere in New Orleans was much different from that created by the Democrats. In Atlanta, the streets were bustling with members of the press, demonstrators and vendors. New Orleans appeared sedate by comparison.

At the Democratic convention, there was a designated free speech site and a full schedule of demonstrations. Groups as diverse as animal rights advocates and white supremacists organized protests. At the Republican convention, no such free speech site existed and very few demonstrations were observed.

In Atlanta, I felt a part of what was happening. In New Orleans, I was on the outside looking in.

Box 40422

Dare Gets Around

Dear *Dare*,

Congratulations on the publishing of *Dare*! I am glad to see more gay newspapers cropping up, especially in the South. I know it's hard for the gay communities to be out in the open down there—but papers like yours helps [sic] not just the gay community. Also, it spreads acceptance [sic] of us to the straight community and everything helps! Keep up the great work.

By the way, I read about your paper in *GCN* [*Gay Community News*, a national newspaper covering lesbian and gay issues—ed].

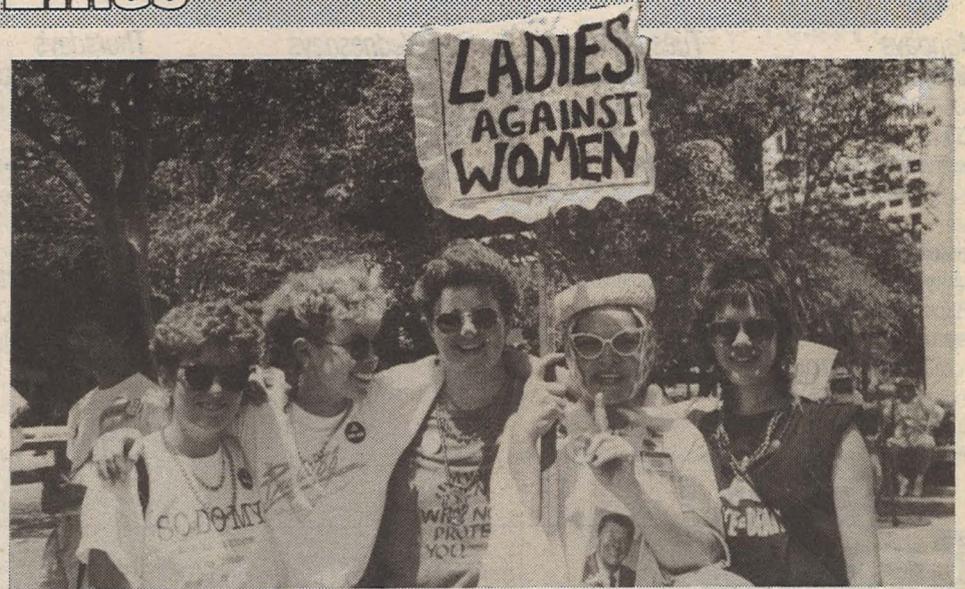
If you could possibly send me a publication of *Dare*, I'd love it. I am also in prison.

Just thought you would like to here [sic] my thoughts.

Good luck.

Andrew Chapin
Plainfield, IN

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+ 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.



Nasbvillians (l-r) Carole Cunningham, Diane Easter, Deborah Burks and Penny Campbell take time out at the Republican National Convention in New Orleans to talk with an unidentified member of Ladies Against Women (in pink headscarf). The "lady" said that her tongue-in-cheek group Ladies Against Women, also known as Moms for Bombs, opposes "gay rights because it leads to gay marriages, and those lead to gay divorces."

On Sunday afternoon, President Reagan arrived in New Orleans and attended a welcoming rally at the Municipal Convention Center (the convention itself was held at the Louisiana Superdome). Members of ACT UP picketed the event, chanting, "Money for AIDS, not for war," and distributing literature to those attending the welcome speech. Electing to function as a reporter, I did not participate in this action.

ACT-UP members then congregated on the sidewalk to discuss protesting inside the Municipal Convention Center where Reagan was speaking. Some members felt it was too risky and decided not to participate. I listened to this discussion and had to make my own decision. I realized the potential danger but felt, as a journalist, I should be there to report on the happenings. I followed the 14 other people across the street and into the Municipal Convention Center, wondering if we'd be arrested. The event was open to the public and we entered the hall without incident.

Once inside the crowded Municipal Convention Center, demonstrators raised their "Silence=Death" and "AIDSGATE" posters and as Reagan began his speech, they chanted, "History will recall, Reagan did nothing at all." Attempting to be a detached reporter, I stood near the group and watched the response of the crowd.

My objectivity quickly gave way to anger, disgust and fear as members of the Republican Party (loyal to Reagan, North and Nixon, no doubt) ripped down the protest signs, punched and kicked the demonstrators and shouted such directives as "Get those queers out of here!"

A smiling woman threw her beer on Rollerina and Mark, members of ACT UP. I saw little old ladies urging men in three-piece suits to "beat the shit out of those faggots."

I watched several members of the Young Americans for Freedom (the Button-down Mafia—all wearing navy blue suits, loafers and Bush '88 buttons) orchestrate rounds of "Go home, Commies!" and then descend on the demonstrators, destroying the signs and threatening violence.

While members of the Secret Service attempted to deflect the aggressions of the hostile crowd, Reagan, oblivious as usual, continued with his remarks. The police eventually

cleared a path through the crowd, enabling the demonstrators to leave the floor. Their exit was followed by cheers of "Victory".

The man who had been standing next to me turned in my direction, expecting, I suppose, to find me wearing a victorious smile.

Instead, he saw my "Lesbian Vote" button. Hatred filled his eyes as he yelled, "You're one of them, too. Get out of here." He then grabbed my button and ripped it off my shirt.

It has taken me too many years to develop the courage to wear such a button and I wasn't going to allow this homophobic Republican dressed in a navy blue blazer and red power tie to take it from me.

Resisting the urge to kick him in the balls, I looked him in the eyes, grabbed my button and followed the others out of the convention center before he had a chance to retaliate.

It was a frightening, shocking experience and several of those involved felt lucky to have escaped unharmed. Five members of ACT-UP were arrested during the ordeal and charged with disturbing the peace, which in this case actually meant disturbing the Party.

This was the prevailing attitude of those Republicans participating in the violence—"You have no right to be here or to question the actions of President Reagan. This is our party."

The leadership of the Republican Party, or President Reagan, have yet to comment on the incident.

Because those in the crowd shouted "Liberal" with the same vehemence as they shouted "Queer," I realized their anger was not altogether a result of mere homophobia. They would have reacted that way toward anyone who dared to disrupt their pep rally in New Orleans.

I am fairly convinced that such an incident would never have occurred at the Democratic Convention. Democrats represent, or attempt to represent, diversity and promote respect for individual rights.

At the Democratic Convention, I wore my "Lesbian Vote" button without incident.

The Democrats appear to respect freedom of expression whether it be through a button, a demonstration or criticism of their candidates.

I came away from my stay in New Orleans with a rip in my Audre Lorde T-shirt and a ripping enthusiasm for Michael Dukakis.

Pages



"Nu, You Couldn't Leave Well Enough Alone?": A Letter to Harvey Milk

A Letter to Harvey Milk. Lesléa Newman. Ithaca: Firebrand, 1988. \$8.95, paperback. 173 pages.

By **SHERRE DRYDEN**
Entertainment Editor

For Jewish lesbians, particularly in the South, where their isolation is even greater than elsewhere, Lesléa Newman's collection of stories, *A Letter to Harvey Milk*, will be confirming and empowering. For the rest of us, women and men, they will be reminders of the triple otherness of women who are not heterosexual and not Christian in a male heterosexist, Christianity-based society.

A unifying theme of Newman's stories is the importance of community - among Jews, among Jewish women, among Jewish lesbians. Many of her characters struggle with re-joining a community they have rejected (or that has rejected them). They need ties with the past and with others like themselves but cannot live as their mothers did. Yet eventually - as we learn in the final story - they discover ways to modify traditional culture, to bring it into harmony with their own lives, and to take from it the support they long for.

Sometimes they find community in unexpected places. In the title story, one of

Newman's best, 30-year-old Barbara, a lesbian and a teacher, connects with Harry, a heterosexual and her student. When Harry writes of his friendship with Harvey Milk for a class assignment, Barbara comes out to him, leading Harry to write poignantly of his relationship with his wife, of his thoughts about Barbara, of his friend Izzie's love for another young man in a Nazi death camp. Barbara and Harry don't become friends, exactly, but he is able to show her that friendship is possible.

Unfortunately, most of Newman's characters are superficial; many are stereotypical Jews (Jewish mothers, older Jewish women and men, etc.). Others represent gratuitous examples one of just about every "type" you might encounter in the gay and lesbian community: disabled, incest survivors, butch and femme, jocks, black women, PWAs, separatists. It's as though she had a checklist.

Newman's repeated use of Yiddish and Hebrew words and unexplained references to Jewish traditions is disconcerting, but demonstrates the connectedness of the characters. Regardless of age, sex or sexual orientation, the words symbolize the community they share. It also makes it graphically clear to non-Jewish readers how it feels to be outside, different from the norm. In *Letters to Harvey Milk*, Jewish is the norm; the majority are suddenly the outsiders.

Having characters speak in the traditional Yiddish/English dialect could serve the same purpose. Instead, either because of the way Newman does it or because I'm so used to hearing stand-up comics talk that way, the dialect makes it hard to take the characters seriously. And since only older, tradition-bound, heterosexual women and men say things like, "Oy Kinehora, so big you are already. Next time you come you'll bring Alice with you," I wonder - is Newman merely portraying reality or does she not take them very seriously, either.

All in all, though, Newman's stories are worth reading. The collection is short, for one thing, and some of the stories are funny, others quite moving. And there's a Yiddish and Hebrew glossary at the end.



Boys' Town: So Funny You'll Forget to Laugh

Boys' Town, by Art Bosch. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1988. \$7.95, paperback. 200 pages.

By **FRANK ASHE**
Special to Dare

The phrase that comes to mind in considering Art Bosch's *Boys' Town* is "prose cartoon." The book's bizarrely exaggerated style and multiplicity of short chapters vividly suggest a series of comic strip panels. So, unfortunately, do the plot and characterization.

The story revolves around a trio of men who share a house in the gay enclave of West Hollywood. They are, in order of appearance, the Macho Bodybuilder, the Sensitive Artist and the Fresh-Faced Kid from the Heartland. The same cast used to populate Marvel war comics, as I recall. They trick, dish, win lotteries, become involved with AIDS patients and marry doctors. Finally they emerge, Wiser Than Before, and a good thing, too. Here is one of them having a cooking lesson:

"Now, did you separate the eggs?"

"Yeah...I put one in the living room and one in Jesse's bedroom."

We do not learn until the end of the book that this character is a sort of fictional self-portrait. But I suspected early on.

Despite the care lavished on his heroes, though, the author has not stinted his skill in creating the supporting cast. Let him place *The Heterosexual Woman* before you in a few words:

"Justine, a spastic antithesis of her husband, looked like a freaked-out Ophelia in post-nuclear drag, with padded NFL shoulders, guerrilla make-up and a wild-child bouffant that seemed to have tangled with a vacuum cleaner and lost."

The pithy, telling phrase abounds in this book, tempting one constantly to highlighter markings and pensive meditation. One character "felt like he'd been hit by a steam roller," while an address is "a hop, skip and a jump from Boys' Town." The stunning metaphor, too, is well within Mr. Bosch's powers: "Scout hadn't seen baskets that size since Easter."

Perhaps most impressive of all is the author's faith, fundamental, absolute and inerrant, in the immortality of a good joke. Remember the gay burglar who rearranges the furniture? Here he is again. Ditto the gay gang that attacks women and does their hair. And the remark, "Gee, I'm sort of tied up tonight," is followed, relentlessly and inexorably, by "He looked like the bondage type." Let me slap my knee.

In all seriousness, I confess myself puzzled as to the reader this book is meant for, by either its author or publisher. At volume length - and never was any volume lengthier - this kind of thing is agonizing to anyone who appreciates good prose. But references to the likes of Sylvia Plath and M.C. Escher do not indicate that the author is writing for an audience of airheads.

Let it be said, there is one page of *Boys' Town* that is entirely graceful, unaffected and genuine. It is the last, and I am glad to quote it here in full, to the honor of all that is real and unabsurd in Bosch's efforts: "Ten percent of the author's royalties for this work are being donated to the American Foundation for AIDS Research in Los Angeles, California."

That out of the way, I advise simply donating the entire price of the book. As for the author, I think he should maybe learn to draw.

Max and Mona



