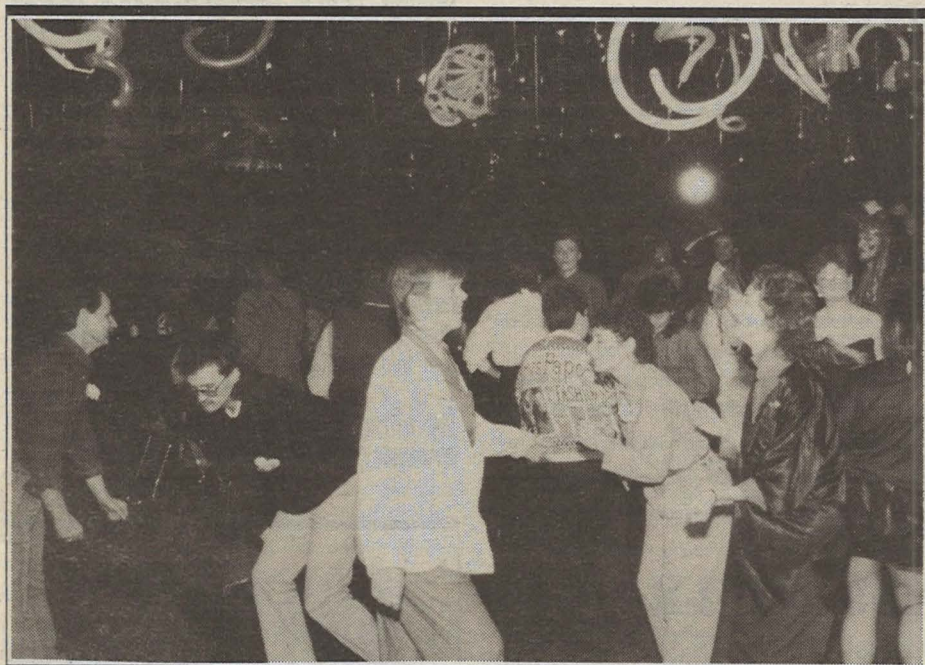


Dare

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 7

TENNESSEE'S GAY AND LESBIAN NEWSWEEKLY

FEBRUARY 17-23, 1989



Sweethearts and revelers enjoy the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance's (T-GALA) Second Annual *Out and About Ball* Tuesday night at Nashville's Warehouse 28. T-GALA Finance Co-chair Terry Kevlin put attendance for the Valentine's Day celebration at 250. —DARE PHOTO BY ROBIN CONOVER

Kowalski didn't get good care: Thompson

by **STUART BIVIN**
Editor

Minnesota lesbian-and-handicapped rights activist Karen Thompson continues her battle to win guardianship of her disabled lover Sharon Kowalski while Kowalski remains at a temporary treatment facility under court order.

Penny Campbell, coordinator of the Nashville Free Sharon Kowalski Committee, spoke with Thompson during a telephone conference of local coordinators Sunday about Thompson's reunion with Kowalski.

"Karen is very angry that Sharon's treatment

has not been up to par. She said that Sharon may not ever walk again because the Hibbing [Minnesota] facility [where Kowalski was hospitalized by her father until she was moved by court order] did not provide movement therapy or massage for her feet — they're turned in and atrophied," Campbell said.

Kowalski's father Donald is her guardian, and has prevented Thompson from seeing her.

"There's also a problem with Sharon's short-term memory, although it's not clear whether timely treatment could have helped that. Sharon remembers who Karen is, but cannot

remember Karen's visits from day to day. Every day, when Karen goes in, Sharon has to relive this really emotionally draining reunion because she doesn't remember Karen having come in before," Campbell said.

"Of course, Sharon does recognize Karen, and says often that she wants to go home with her. Karen told us that the staff at the new facility is anxious for Sharon to go home, and that every staff member who works with Sharon has taken her aside to tell her that they think her efforts are very important and that they support her," Campbell added. •

Former sheriff raped Henderson County inmates

by **JEFF ELLIS**
Managing Editor

LEXINGTON, Tenn. — Henderson County typifies the quiet Southern counties that dot the western Tennessee landscape.

The 22,500 residents of the county, just west of the Tennessee River, are a proud lot, described by local Chamber of Commerce officials as "hard-working farmers" and light industry workers.

Thus, when charges were first leveled at then-Sheriff Jack Fowler, people scoffed at the notion that the lawman had forcibly had sex with male inmates in the county jail. But evidence indicates that Fowler may have been subjecting prisoners to sexual harassment and battery as early as 1977.

Now serving a ten-year sentence in federal prison for violating prisoners' civil rights, former sheriff Fowler was indicted on state charges last Friday on 15 counts of raping and sodomizing prisoners in his jail.

Fowler's indictment last Friday culminated a four-and-a-half year struggle by victims of his abuse to have state charges filed against the former sheriff. He was charged with aggravated rape, which carries with it a possible sentence of 20 years to life imprisonment.

The case against Fowler was presented to the Henderson County Grand Jury by special prosecutor, District Attorney Kenneth Atkins of Dickson County's 23rd Judicial District. Atkins was appointed to the case after Henderson County D.A. Jerry Woodall was accused of feet-dragging in bringing the case to the grand jury.

Woodall, who Monday refused to comment on the case, presented findings in the Fowler case to the grand jury last October. Rumors of Fowler's misconduct were first brought to Woodall's attention in 1982, according to one Lexington man.

However, Woodall admitted he was reluctant to bring the case to the grand jury because Fowler's popularity would have made it nearly impossible to get an indictment.

Fowler became the subject of an investigation by federal authorities in 1986, which eventually led to an indictment on federal charges that he had violated the civil rights of nine prisoners. He is serving a ten-year sentence for conviction on those charges.

Because rape is punishable under state, not federal, law, Fowler was charged by the Federal grand jury with civil rights violations. Since his conviction, Fowler's victims have continued their struggle to have him indicted on state charges.

The former sheriff was charged with aggra
continued on page 3

Les/gay community applauds first black leader of major party

by **STUART BIVIN**
Editor

The selection of Washington, D.C., lawyer and political activist Ron Brown as Democratic National Committee chair "bodes well for the lesbian, gay and AIDS activist community," according to Robert Bray, Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) director of communications. HRCF is the country's largest national lesbian/gay rights political action committee.

Brown, the first black person ever to head a major American political party, was elected unanimously last week by state Democratic party chiefs. He served as campaign manager for Jesse Jackson's 1988 Presidential bid.

"Brown is a card-carrying liberal, so this is a signal to those who are concerned that there might have been a backlash in the Democratic party against liberals. There has been some

concern that the Democratic leadership might try to move the party to the right in light of the Dukakis loss — to try to become more Republican. We view this as a sign that that won't happen," Bray told *Dare* by phone Friday.

Bray praised Brown's political acumen and commitment to issues important to the lesbian and gay community.

"Brown is politically astute. He's a shrewd tactician," Bray said, adding that he did not believe Brown will abandon the party's liberal constituencies in order to satisfy conservative southern party leaders.

"He has a record of being sensitive to the Democratic party's traditional bases: women, blacks, workers, lesbians and gay men," Bray said, "I guess anything's possible, so there's always that danger, but now is now, and he's pretty much the classic liberal now." •

I N S I D E

this week's *Dare*

Are you sexually sober?
Part II in a series.
Sex in the 80s, page 4.

*Sex
in
the 80s*



We all have a dream, but
how much should it cost?
Soapbox, page 6.

The body is
Stephen Spender's *Temple*.
Pages, page 8.

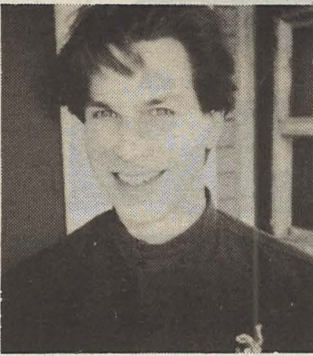
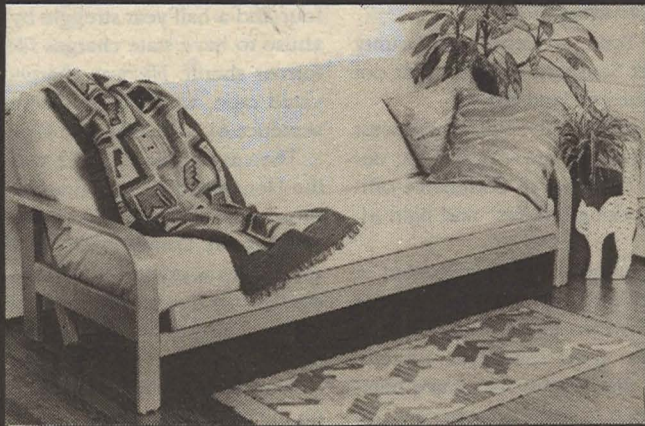


Michelle
Salon
Lauren

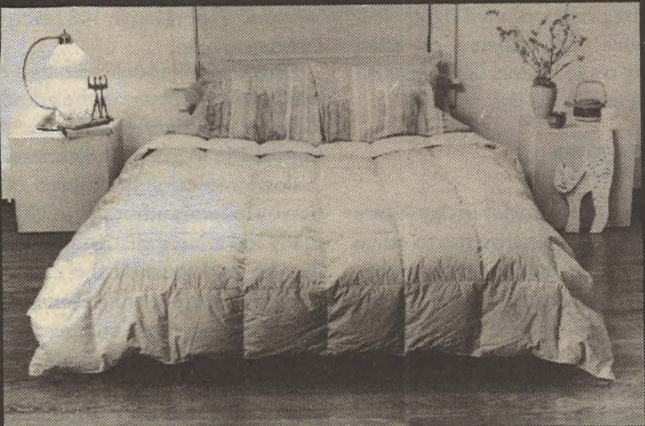
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D A T E S

MEMPHIS

Mondays

Gay Alternative Hour Radio show, WEVL-FM 90, 6-7pm.
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

Tuesdays

Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30 and 8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

Wednesdays

Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

Thursdays

P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Support group, St. John's Episcopal Church, 322 S Greer. 1st Thursday only. Info 901 761-1444.
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30pm. Info 901 272-9459.
Into the Light (Women's Alcoholics Anonymous) Meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 276-7379.

Fridays

Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30 and 10pm. Info 901 272-9459.

Saturdays

Twisted Sisters (ACOA) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Noon. Info 901 276-7379.
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

Sundays

Agape New Life Church Sunday School, 9:30am. Worship service, 11am. Info 901 276-1872.
Holy Trinity Community Church Worship service, 11am. 1216 Forrest Ave. Info 901 726-9443.
Into the Light (Women's Alcoholics Anonymous) Meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Noon. Info 901 276-7379.
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

NASHVILLE

Mondays

Gay Overeaters Anonymous Open meeting for lesbian and gay overeaters. MCC, 5:30pm. Info 615-327-4614.
Nashville CARES HIV+ Education/Support Group, 6:30pm. ARC/AIDS Support Group, bimonthly, 6:30pm. Family Support Group, bimonthly, 6:30pm. Info 615-385-1510.
Lambda Group Closed Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for gay men and lesbians, Unitarian Church. 8pm.
MAGNET (Married and Gay Network) Support group for married gay men. 1st & 3rd Mondays only. MCC, 8pm. Info 615-320-0288.

Tuesdays

Al-Anon Closed meeting, MCC, 6:30pm.
Nashville CARES ARC/AIDS Support Group, 4pm. Info 615-385-1510.
MTSU Lambda Association Meeting for lesbian and gay Middle Tennessee State University students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Murfreesboro. 7pm. Info 615-890-3787.
Sober Sisters (Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous) Closed meeting, MCC, 8pm.
Gay Cable Network Viacom Channel 35 (Community Access Television). 9pm.

Wednesdays

Sex Addicts Anonymous Closed meeting for gay men and lesbians. MCC. 5:30pm.
Nashville CARES ARC/AIDS Support Group, 6:30pm. Info 615-385-1510.

Thursdays

Gay Overeaters Anonymous Open meeting for lesbian and gay overeaters. MCC, 5:30pm. Info 615-327-4614.
Nashville CARES Visualization Group, 6:30pm. Info 615-385-1510.
Vanderbilt Lambda Association Meeting for gay and lesbian Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff and alumni. President's House, Peabody Campus, alternates weekly with Film Series (see Special Events). 7pm. Info 615-297-5352.
Alternatives (Alcoholics Anonymous) Closed meeting for lesbians and gay men, MCC, 8pm.
Lesbian Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) Meeting, 8pm. Info 615-385-4776 or 615-352-5823.

Fridays

Sexaholics Anonymous Closed meeting, MCC, 5pm.
Gay Parents Support Group Meeting, MCC, 1st Friday only. 7pm. Info 615-831-2941 or 615-320-0288.
Alcoholics Anonymous Program Study Group Meeting, Belmont United Methodist. 7:30 pm.

Saturdays

Nashville CARES HIV/ARC Support Group, bimonthly, 4pm. Info 615-385-1510.
Metropolitan Community Church Mortgage Meal, all you can eat. 7:30pm. \$5.
Gay Cable Network Viacom Channel 35 (Community Access Television). 8pm.

Sundays

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

Special Events

Saturday, February 18

Seminar *Loving Yourself Unconditionally*, Susan Taranto. Sponsored by Gay Women's Social Group, Memphis. 7:30pm. \$2 donation. Info 901-324-6949.

Sunday, February 19

Brunch Gonzales & Gertrude's, Overton Square, Memphis. Sponsored by Black and White Men Together/Memphis. 12:30pm. Followed by outing to Memphis Brooks Museum's multimedia presentation of *Paul Robeson, All-American*. Info 901-726-1461.

Monday, February 20

PRESIDENTS' DAY

Monday, February 20

MTSU Lambda Association Meeting to reorganize for new semester. For lesbian and gay Middle Tennessee State University students, faculty, staff, and alumni. MTSU Keathley University Ctr, Murfreesboro. 7pm. Info 615-890-3787.

Wednesday, February 22

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY



Minnie Bruce Pratt

Thursday, February 23

Lecture *Books in the Closet, Books in the Attic: A Lesbian Writer Talks About Racism, Homophobia and Class Issues in the South*. Minnie Bruce Pratt, poet, essayist, and feminist. Sponsored by Vanderbilt University Students for Women's Concerns. Rm 114, Vanderbilt Furman Hall, Nashville. 7pm. Reception follows. Info 615-385-4283.

Saturday, February 25

Forum *The Making of a Newspaper*, presented by Jeff Ellis and Stuart Bivin. Church and Community Forum, Metropolitan Community Church, 131 15th Av N, Nashville. Following Mortgage Meal. Free. Info 615-320-0288.

Monday, February 27

Caring and Sharing Black and White Men Together/Memphis. Main Library on Peabody. 7:30pm. Free. Info 901-726-1461.

Thursday, March 2

Film *Strangers on a Train*, sponsored by Vanderbilt Lambda Association. 101 Garland Hall, Nashville. 7pm.

Your nonprofit event can be listed free in *Dates*. Write to *Dare*, Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204-0422, or phone 615 292-9623 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. Deadline noon Tuesday for publication next Friday.

...sheriff charged with rape

continued from page 1

vated rape, sodomy and crimes against nature.

Friday's action by the grand jury followed the indictment of Fowler's chief deputy Bobby Ayers on charges he was an accessory after the fact to aggravated rape and crimes against nature. If Ayers is found guilty, he could face a maximum sentence of five years in prison. Ayers' sentence cannot exceed Fowler's sentence if he is convicted.

Fowler, who first won election in 1976, allegedly began sexually assaulting inmates in 1977. Henderson County resident Sam Moffitt told reporters that he had first made formal complaints against

Fowler in 1982, but Woodall refused to bring the issue before the grand jury.

During the summer of 1986, flyers began to circulate throughout the county calling for Fowler's impeachment and removal from office. The flyers said that Fowler was homosexual and that he raped and abused jail inmates.

On August 6, 1986, the day before Fowler was re-elected in an uncontested election, he had Sam Moffitt and his brother, Johnny, arrested on charges of criminal libel for distributing the flyers calling for his impeachment.

The libel trial was interrupted by federal officers who entered the courtroom with a warrant for Fowler's arrest. Charges against the

Moffitt brothers were dismissed in February, 1988, after Fowler pleaded guilty in federal court to violating nine inmates' civil rights.

Despite the charges leveled at the former sheriff, Henderson Countians appear to still support him. Sources in Lexington privately indicated that the local opinion is "that our good old boy sheriff wouldn't do anything like that."

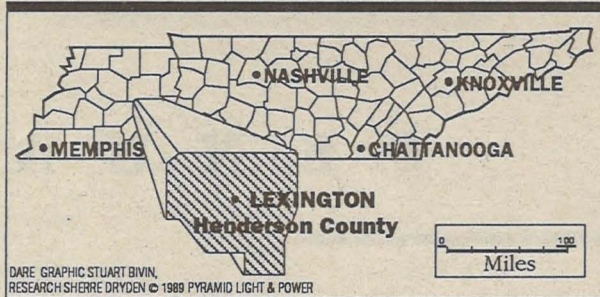
When Fowler was first arraigned on federal charges, locals filled the courthouse to see for themselves if the popular political figure would indeed be charged.

Authorities refuse to say where Fowler is incarcerated. According to current Henderson County Sheriff Bobby Butler, Fowler has been moved time and again from one prison to another to protect him from other inmates who resent him for being a former law officer.

According to *Jackson Sun* reporter Lesley Tritschler, Fowler is believed to be in a federal prison in Oklahoma pending his transfer to Tennessee to stand trial on the sodomy, aggravated rape and crimes against nature charges.

"But even D.A. Woodall isn't sure he's being held there. He told me he hadn't even thought of checking on Fowler until I asked him where he is in prison," Tritschler told *Dare*.

Butler further noted that Fowler has been threatened by other inmates because he is a homosexual. •



DARE GRAPHIC STUART BIVIN, RESEARCH SHERRIE DRYDEN © 1989 PYRAMID LIGHT & POWER

BRIEFS

from STAFF REPORTS

Court: CIA can't ban all homosexuals

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY'S (CIA) blanket policy denying security clearances to all person who are found to have committed "homosexual acts," is wrong.

The 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals made that ruling in late January in the case of Julie Dobbs, a lesbian scientist employed by a Silicone Valley defense contractor. The CIA had denied Dobbs access to classified information necessary to her continued employment in 1981, citing her "pattern of homosexual activity," and adding that granting her a security clearance would not be consistent with the interests of national security.

The court's decision reversed an earlier district court ruling upholding the discriminatory procedures. A CIA appeal of the Circuit Court ruling is expected. •

New rule impedes anti-gay legislators

A RULES CHANGE SPONSORED by openly gay Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), accepted by the U.S. House of Representatives as part of a Democratic package of related bills earlier this month, may in the future quell surprise anti-gay/lesbian actions by members of Congress.

The rules change would adapt existing House rules to allow members to postpone votes on "motions to instruct" joint committee conferees on a Senate amendment for 24 hours and would mandate that floor debate time be divided equally so that opposition to the motion could be voiced.

Although the rules change would seem technical to those unfamiliar with the intricate workings of the Congress, such a change could mean the life or death of a host of anti-gay/lesbian actions such as those faced by the 100th Congress in 1988.

The previously obscure "motion to instruct" gained notoriety in October, 1987, when Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-Calif.) used the then-little known procedure to instruct members of the House conferring with the Senate on the federal AIDS budget.

Dannemeyer attempted to promote a Senate-approved amendment banning the federal funding of AIDS agencies which produced materials that "promote homosexuality."

Frank's change, approved on the first day of the 101st Congress by a party line 231-162 vote, will now buy time for lobbyists and House members by demanding that debate be equally split between speakers for and against the motion and allow a 24-hour postponement of a final vote. •

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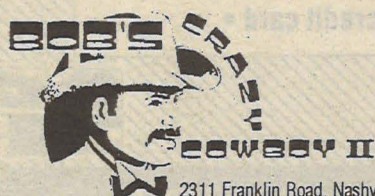
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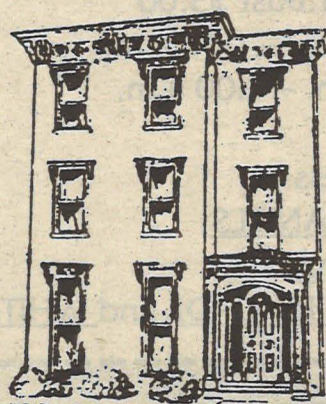
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*"I started to
shake and I
realized how
scared I was. I
knew then I had
a problem..."*

SEXUAL ADDICTION

Is it r

by JEFF ELLIS
Managing Editor

NASHVILLE INSURANCE EXECUTIVE

Rob Davis (not his real name) realized the extent of his addiction to sex during a trip home to Atlanta to visit his family.

Driving down Atlanta's Piedmont Boulevard late one night he noticed a man in a shiny late-model sports car pull out from a service station. He caught the man's eyes and held his gaze for a few seconds and felt the stirrings of sexual attraction.

Before Rob realized what was happening, he was following the man onto a quiet residential street. The two men parked and got out of their cars.

"It was real strange, kind of scary but still very exciting," Rob remembers. "We met between the cars."

And without speaking, the men began to have sex.

Afterwards, Rob felt the exhilaration of the hunter who is successful in bagging his game. But an undercurrent of shame and remorse began to fill him.

"I started to shake and I realized how scared I was. I knew then I had a problem," he says. Rob was — and still is — a sex addict.

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS estimate that some 13 million Americans — both men and women — are addicted to sex. But mentioning sexual addiction is likely to elicit more sneers and snickers than concern.

However, efforts by mental health professionals to recognize the dangers of sexual addiction and to offer treatment may help to bring it out of the closet.

Sexual addiction — whose symptoms can range from excessive masturbation to incest — can be as destructive as alcohol or drug addictions, often ruining careers and relationships.

Locally, three groups offer support (via 12-step programs) to persons with sexual addic-

tion problems. Sexaholics Anonymous (SA), Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA) and Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) all offer meetings.

Rob is a member of one of the groups, but prefers not to say which one he attends.

"It's much easier to maintain anonymity that way," he says.

FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, Rob has attended the group's regular weekly meetings in an effort to maintain his "sexual sobriety."

However, the three groups may differ in their definition of sobriety. While one group may say sobriety is no sex outside a spousal relationship, another might define it as no anonymous sex or no sex outside the home.

Rob decided to seek professional help following his sexual adventure in Atlanta.

"The possible danger excited me. I thought, 'What if he kills me?' I didn't care. And that scared the hell out of me when I realized I didn't care if I lived or die as long as I got off," he says.

Rob attributes his addiction to a low self-image, brought about by his inability to deal with his sexual orientation.

"I guess I thought being gay meant being a whore. I was driven by lust," he supposes. "I was not out of the closet at work or to my family and would submerge myself into a different world."

FOR ROB THAT MEANT making the rounds of adult bookstores, peep shows, parks and bars. Sometimes, his foray into Nashville's sexual underground would culminate in sexual relations with as many as five men in one night.

"I'd go home from work, change clothes and go to a bookstore. Sometimes I ended up going to three or four in one night until I was satisfied," Rob recalls. "It was like an itch — I had to scratch it."

On occasion, Rob would develop an

*Sex
in
the 8*

*Sex
in
the 8*

Sex
in
80s

ADDICTION

real?

itch while at work, often masturbating in the wash room and then taking a long lunch to visit a peep show.

"Usually, I'd have sex with some guy and then go back to work," he says.

BY THE TIME of that fateful trip to Atlanta in 1987, Rob was demonstrating almost textbook examples of addiction. Authorities say that sex addicts often:

- Live a secret sexual life steeped in lies and shame.
- Find it nearly impossible to control urges.
- Pursue sexual interests obsessively despite personal and financial risks.

Rob now credits his support group and his therapist with "changing [his] life."

"My therapist probably saved my life, actually. And the group gave me the strength and the courage to carry on on a day-to-day basis," he says.

And for almost a year now, Rob has been sexually sober, which for him has meant being celibate.

But there are no easy answers for a sex addict, just as there are no easy answers for someone addicted to drugs or alcohol.

According to the National Association on Sexual Addiction Problems, "sexual addiction is obsessive/compulsive sexual behavior which if left unattended, will cause severe distress and despair for both the individual and the family."

"THE SEXUAL ADDICT IS unable to control his or her sexual behavior and lives with constant pain, alienation and fear of discovery."

NASAP says that the best indicator that a sexual addiction problem exists is the history of negative consequences due to sexually compulsive behavior.

"These consequences may be financial, social, emotional, physical and/or legal in nature," according to NASAP. •

☐ Are you addicted to sex?

Sexual desire is not an automatic indicator of sexual addiction. Neither is masturbation on a regular basis. But if you're afraid that you may be addicted to sex, the National Association on Sexual Addiction Problems offers these questions:

- ☐ 1. Do you sense that your sexual thoughts and behaviors are causing problems in your life?
- ☐ 2. Have your sexual thoughts and behaviors interfered with your ability to function at home, school or work?
- ☐ 3. Do you fail to meet commitments or carry out responsibilities due to your sexual behavior or thoughts?
- ☐ 4. Do you struggle to control or stop your sexual thoughts and behaviors only to find that you fail time and again?
- ☐ 5. Do you spend more money than you can afford on sexual activities or on sexually-explicit materials?
- ☐ 6. Do you feel guilty or shameful after engaging in sexual activity or sexual fantasy?
- ☐ 7. Do you risk danger by not taking reasonable precautions or by going to unsafe places in order to have sex?
- ☐ 8. Has an important relationship in your life ended because of your inability to curtail sexual activities in or outside of that relationship?
- ☐ 9. Do you undress, masturbate or engage in other sexual activities in places where you are likely to be seen by strangers?
- ☐ 10. Have you ever been arrested as the result of your sexual behavior or activities?
- ☐ 11. Has your pursuit of sexual activity become more compulsive and ritualized?
- ☐ 12. Do you resort to sex to escape, relieve anxiety, or just to cope with problems?

While a few experts reject the concept of sexual addiction, most agree that if you answer "yes" to at least one of these questions, a sexual addiction problem may exist. •

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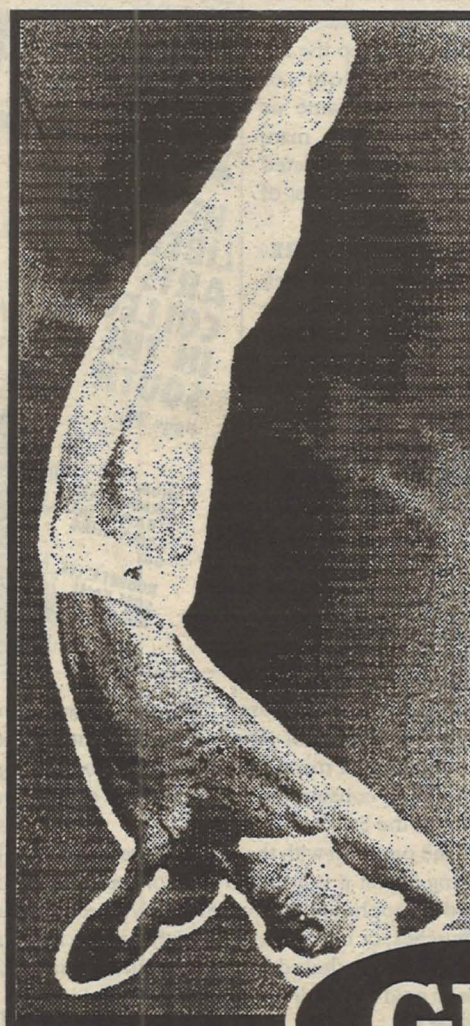
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Dare

Tennessee's Gay and Lesbian Newsweekly
From the Heart of the American South

February 17-23, 1989
Volume 2, Number 7

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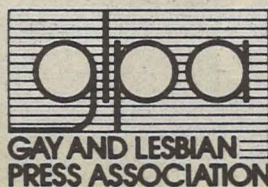
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S O A P B O X

Paying for the Dream

by CAROLE CUNNINGHAM

Staff Writer

WHEN A MAJOR mainstream magazine like *Southern* magazine devotes a feature article to gay life in the South ("From Birmingham: Straight Talk About Being Gay," February 1989) it would seem to signal a thawing of the icy moralist landscape most gay people accept as a patent part of living in the Bible Belt. Sandwiched between articles on the South's "ivy league" colleges and a portrait of environmentalists' efforts to reclaim polluted portions of the Mississippi River, the magazine incorporates a profile of Birmingham's gay community into its pages as easily and with as little fanfare as they would include an article about the Daughters of the Confederacy.

Yet the very ease with which Billy Cox and his circle of friends fit between the pages of *Southern* is in fact the very heart of the problem: while their Mardi Gras celebrations may be a bit more flamboyant than the one held at the Birmingham country club, and while their sense of fashion is probably always a step ahead of the Joneses, the men who form what is called in the article the "South's gay elite" are in no material or political way (and for most of us these are the same thing) any different than their heterosexual counterparts in the Southern "establishment." No more threatening in their lifestyles than the little old lady next door. But why aren't the

Joneses afraid of these men? Surely these gay men take it up the ass (with condom of course) the same as any other gay man; they are "unconvicted felons" like the rest of us. Or are they?

IN MANY RESPECTS, the gay men in *Southern's* article are living the life many of us—activists included—dream about: they are professionally successful and financially secure; they live in neighborhoods they have "gentrified" with other successful, secure gay people; they are influential in community groups, churches, and a wide

assortment of civic causes. They do not experience the threat of job loss, harassment, or discrimination many consider now to be the inevitable consequence of being gay or lesbian in the South.

The problem with the dream these men are living is that it is a dream born of repression and homophobia. No one in the civic groups, churches, or businesses knows these men are gay—making their dream a dream that hasn't been paid for, their privileged lives lined with silver lies.

And sadly, the "gay elite" of Birmingham are found in many other Southern cities, and Northern cities too. They can certainly be found in Tennessee. They are alternately described by *Southern* as "powerful," "an integrated part of the Southern elite," a "mirror

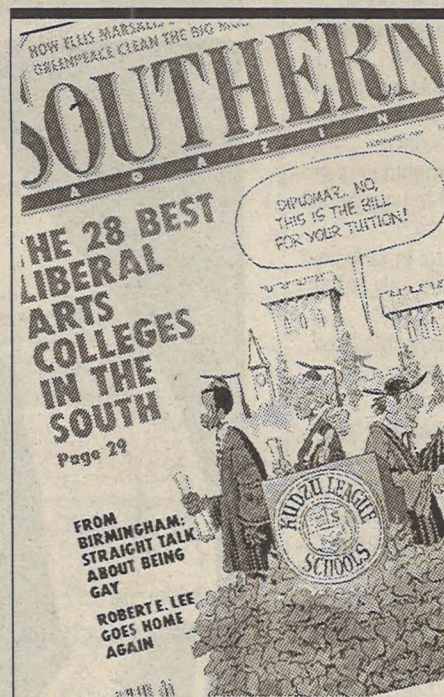
image of the region's traditional, old-line, upper-middle-class heterosexual establishment": in short, no more queer than a one-dollar bill. "So long as you don't have a strip show at your party that might offend your straight friends, your sexual preference is your own business," says Billy Cox, the only member of the Birmingham elite who lets himself be named. Tailoring parties to the comfort level of Birmingham straights is only the beginning of the self-mutilation of identity practiced by these gay men in order to keep their penthouse, their six-figure incomes, and the dubious comfort of feeling accepted by the old-line establishment.

BUT THE MEN in the Brooks Brothers suits are not the only ones who pay for their "dream" coming true. Every self-respecting queer in Birmingham and elsewhere pays for the gay elite dream every time they are told they can be accepted as long as they do not "act too flamboyant," "too effeminate," too uncomfortablely queer; so long as they never tell their families, their family's friends, their colleagues, that they are gay. So long as they look straight, act straight, and speak straight, they too can live the dream as though it were reality.

Needless to say, there are no lesbians in the

"gay elite" portrayed in *Southern's* pages, because no matter how hard they might try, lesbians cannot mirror the South's white heterosexual male establishment. There are no middle-class gay men in the article, no one poor, jobless, no one with AIDS, no one suffering because they are queer. Because no one in the South's gay elite is queer. Their insular lives separate them only marginally from the straight world, but inextricably from the queer world.

IF THEY CONTINUE to do what is expected of them, they may never experience harassment, discrimination, loss of family, children, or income. But they also will never experience the security of genuine community, self-acceptance, self-reliance: they will always rely on the straight world to tell them who to be, what to do, and how to do it. The dream they have is a sham; the lives they lead as pitiable as they are pretentious. "Straight Talk About Being Gay" is just that: straight talk. Save your two bucks for a subscription to *Dare*.



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P A G E S

The Temple

The Temple by Stephen Spender. New York: Grove Press, 1988. \$15.95.

reviewed by **CHRIS FREEMAN**
Special to Dare

IN A RECENT ARTICLE about his new book *The Company We Keep*, literary critic Wayne Booth discussed his early views of D.H. Lawrence. Booth said that, early in his career, he was asked to deliver a paper on Lawrence, but he decided to decline because he found Lawrence too "preachy." Lawrence, Booth and many others think, speaks too often and too obviously through his characters. After re-reading Lawrence, however, Booth was able to enjoy the controversial British writer in spite of his "faults."

Stephen Spender, another "controversial" British writer, can be perceived to be too forceful in using his characters in *The Temple*

as mouthpieces for himself. But, in spite of this "fault," he has written an interesting story with a fascinating history.

In the introduction, Spender explains that he wrote a manuscript of the novel in 1929. In 1962, he sold it to the University of Texas, and he forgot about it. A friend of Spender's discovered the manuscript in Austin in 1985, so Spender re-read, revised and finished the novel in 1987.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL novel set in England and Germany, *The Temple* is the story of Spender, Christopher Isherwood, W.H. Auden and Herbert List. Paul, the main character (and Spender in the text) is a developing writer who leaves oppressive England for the (sexually) liberated Germany.

The Temple is, in many ways, a luxurious novel. Spender's style emphasizes the aesthetics of English and German architecture and the captivating beauty of bodies. From the titillating List photograph on the cover to the descriptions of the swimmers at German baths, Spender worships the naked body the way his characters worship the sun.

The body is the temple.

Of *The Temple*, Spender claims that it is "pre-thirties and pre-political" and that it is a "complex of memory, fiction and hindsight." The second part is certainly true, but I found the novel, especially the last third, political. It is strongly anti-Nazi and mournful of the passing of Weimar Germany. There are interesting parallels implied between Nazi Germany and 1920s England. How is that for "pre-political"?

The unusual nature of the composition of the novel makes it a fascinating study. In terms of its era, the novel is at once modern and post-modern; thematically, it is celebratory of the

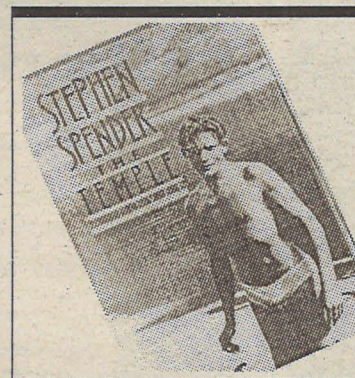
body human but condemnatory of the body politic.

SPENDER'S POEM "1929," a poem that Paul is writing in the novel, is the epilogue for *The Temple*. The poem ends:

*Lives, risen a moment, joined or separate,
Fall heavily, then are ever separate,
Sod lifted, turned, slapped back again with
spade.*

In *The Temple*, the lives of these characters are somehow both joined and separate. And, after the novel ends, with their lives well into the 1930s, their separateness is all that is left.

Yes, Spender is sometimes overzealous in his polemicizing, but the overall effect of the novel is not subverted by this "flaw." Spender succeeds in simultaneously praising and lamenting this microcosmic view of the transitions in Europe from 1929 to 1932, transitions that would affect all of the world. The liberated Germany so loved and sought after by Spender and his contemporaries is gone forever after 1932, and, in *The Temple*, Spender suggests that as goes Germany, so goes the rest of the world. •



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B R I E F S

from STAFF REPORTS

Iowa asks about sexual orientation

IOWA GAY AND LESBIAN ORGANIZATIONS and civil libertarians have asked that the state discontinue its policy of questioning applicants for jobs as law enforcement officers about their sexual orientation.

The longstanding practice had not been previously reported until recently when an Iowa lesbian applying for a state trooper position was asked about her sexual orientation.

"She saw her choices as either giving a dishonest answer and getting trapped by the polygraph test or giving a honest answer and having that be the end of the employment process. So she left," said John Schmacker of the Gay Coalition of Des Moines.

Sam Knowles, spokesperson for the Iowa Department of Public Safety, said that the agency had been asking applicants for troopers, fire marshals and other positions that question for years, because "our people are expected to set an example in the community and we look at a lot of things."

Blaine Goff, chief of the Iowa State Patrol, defended the practice and said the patrol asks the questions to avoid hiring an employee who might be susceptible to blackmail.

The questions are legal under Iowa law, according to the state attorney general's office, but Schmacker said the actual intent of the state's policy is "to avoid having gay and lesbian people" as employees. •