

Dare

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TENNESSEE'S GAY AND LESBIAN NEWSWEEKLY

MARCH 31-APRIL 6, 1989

No HIV found in Dennison patients

by JEFF ELLIS
Managing Editor

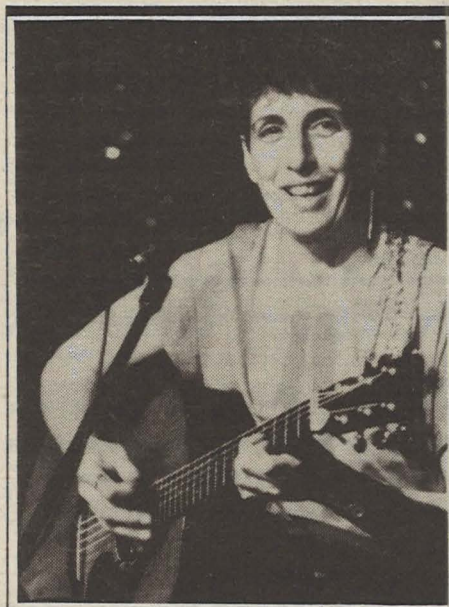
No trace of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) was found among the 500 former patients of Harold Dennison who were tested following the Nashville physician's death in January.

More than 2,100 letters were sent last month by the Tennessee AIDS Program to former surgical patients of the doctor offering free, confidential testing. Dennison died from complications brought on by his battle with AIDS.

The decision by state health officials to offer the free testing came after "several hundred" phone calls from Dennison's former surgical patients who feared for their own safety after the story came to light. The letters were sent to former patients treated by Dennison during a six-year period.

"About 150 people called in and they had already had the test done and they were negative," said Dr. Glenn Davis, the program's medical director. "Over 500 test results were either called in or done by the Metro Health Department, and they were all negative."

According to a report in Sunday's *Ten-*



Alix Dobkin, noted lesbian separatist singer/songwriter, appeared in concert in Memphis, Nashville and Knoxville this week. The appearances marked Dobkin's Tennessee debut. Deborah Burks' interview of Dobkin is on page 4. — DARE PHOTO BY ROBIN CONOVER

nessean, another 150 former patients had died from other causes, leaving more than 1,400 patients who either did not take the test or were tested privately.

Chief of surgery at Nashville's Baptist Hospital, Dennison claimed that he contracted the
• continued on page 3

Tennessee legislators take up state sodomy statute

by JEFF ELLIS
Managing Editor

Legislative action is expected within the next two weeks on proposed changes in the Tennessee Criminal Code, according to Capitol Hill sources.

Among the proposed revisions is a change in the state sodomy law which would eliminate language regarding heterosexual "crimes against nature," but would specifically ban all sexual acts between two persons of the same sex.

The proposed revisions were included in a report filed by a committee of the Tennessee Sentencing Commission which was charged with "eliminating archaic language" in the state's criminal code. Most of the attention of politicians and the media has focused on proposals designed to help alleviate current overcrowding in state prisons.

The committee's proposal would change the current prohibition of "crimes against nature" to a specific ban on all homosexual acts. Since the crimes against nature statute has rarely been invoked against heterosexuals, the committee members said the legislature should make the law more specific if they are attempting to enforce the ban on homosexual acts.

Passage of the massive bill, however, will not be an easy task, according to both lawmakers and political observers. Various proposals have come under fire from the state's attorneys general, the Tennessee Sheriff's Association (TSA), Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA).

According to Deborah Burks, co-chair of

Advance, the group's lobbying efforts may pay off when the time comes for legislators to cast their votes on the sodomy law revisions.

Capitol Hill sources indicate a willingness among some legislators to strike the sodomy statutes from the code. That move, which could have possible negative political ramifications for the lawmakers back in their home districts, could be deflected by more conservative members of the General Assembly.

"In the best of all possible scenarios, this could work out so that the sodomy law is taken out completely. If that doesn't happen, we hope the new proposal will be revised so that it's not directed at homosexuals," Burks said.

The proposal being considered by legislators calls for the reduction of homosexual crimes against nature to a Class C misdemeanor, carrying a sentence of not more than 30 days and/or a fine of not more than \$50.

Tennessee criminal code currently calls for a sentence of not less than five years and not more than 15 years to be levied for committing a crime against nature.

If the revision becomes law, Tennessee will join five other states which specifically classify homosexual acts as criminal.

Homosexual acts are considered misdemeanors in Texas, Arkansas and Kansas. Montana and Nevada statutes classify such acts as felonies. More than half of the United States classify sodomy or crimes against nature as felonies.

"Our ultimate goal is to have the sodomy laws taken off the books, but there is a feeling among some people that even the reduction to a misdemeanor is better than the law as it now stands," Burks said.

• continued on page 3

ATEAC auction raises \$14,000

by JAY DeROSSITT
Contributing Writer

When talk-radio personality Mark Davis bowed his head in prayer to remember those who have died of AIDS, a reflective silence descended upon the crowd of 400 at the Aid to End AIDS (ATEAC) auction in Memphis last Saturday. Then, as he announced the first item up for bid was a copy of Salman Rushdie's controversial *Satanic Verses*, roars and applause shook the ballroom at Memphis' Airport Hilton.

Such high spirits and enthusiasm were the order of the evening as bidders raised a record \$14,000-plus for ATEAC's PWA (people with AIDS) relief fund. Over 200 items ranging from home furnishings to vacations, were donated by area merchants and supporters, keeping the bidding fierce from 7:30 p.m. until midnight.

At Monday night's ATEAC board meeting, president Tommy Stewart said that, in addition to auction sales, cash donations were also made by many guests, helping ATEAC top its \$8000 goal by another 75%. Board members applauded Mark Whitehead, auction chairperson, as Stewart commended him "for doing a great job."

Whitehead, addressing the group, cited the help of "outstanding volunteers and tireless workers" in the event's success. "The excitement of the auction makes me want to get started on something else. We have a great group," he said. ATEAC are underway for a third auction.

ATEAC's PWA Relief Fund is used for direct assistance to PWAs, primarily emergency grants for living expenses, medicine or doctors fees. Those interested in volunteering or donating may phone (901) 458-AIDS. •



The real Marty Katz, ATEAC operations manager. Last week's photo was incorrectly identified as Katz. *Dare* regrets the error and is happy to correct the record. ATEAC raised more than \$14,000 in its second annual auction, \$6000 over its goal.
— DARE PHOTO JAY DEROSITT

I N S I D E

this week's Dare

Chicken hawks and sex stings:
why write news about them?
Between the Lines, page 6.

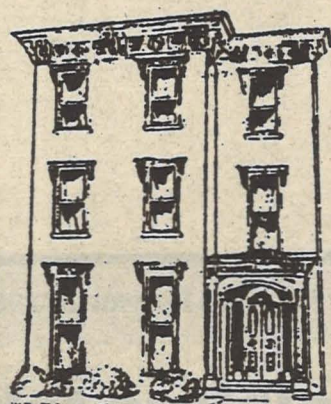


What could possibly be
funny about AIDS?
Pages, page 7.



They can't stop
talking about us.
Quotes, page 8.





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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 615-327-414.
Nashville CARES HIV+ Educ. / 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

Nashville CARES ARC/AIDS Support Group. 4pm. Info 615-385-1510.
AI-Anon Closed meeting, MCC. 6:30pm.
P-FLAG Meeting of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, 4th Tuesday only. Unitarian Church. 7:30pm. Info 615-662-0332.
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.

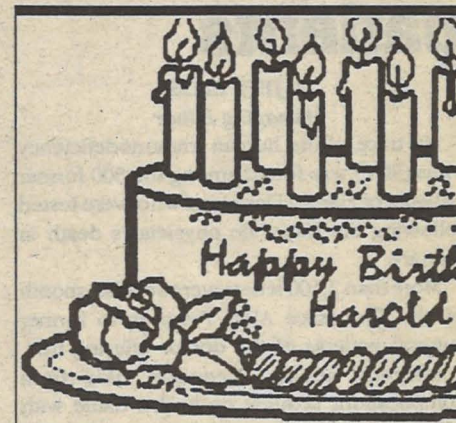
Special Events

Saturday, April 1

APRIL FOOLS' DAY

First Amendment Celebration A public celebration of freedom of speech and of the press and discussion of the problems of censorship, featuring Banned Book Sale and presentation by Norma Klein, author of banned books. Sponsored by American Civil Liberties Union. At Davis-Kidd Booksellers, 4007 Hillsboro Road, Nashville. 2:30pm. Free. Info 615-320-7142.

Anniversary Celebration MCC Roast of Paul Tucker on his sixth anniversary as pastor. 8:30pm, following Mortgage Meal. Metropolitan Community Church, 131 15th Ave N, Nashville. Info 615-320-0288.



The Boys in the Band

Sunday, April 2 — Tuesday, April 4

Play *The Boys in the Band*. At WKRB in Memphis, 1528 Madison. 8pm. Special AIDS benefit Monday, April 3. Info 901-278-9321.

Wednesday, April 5

Telecast *America in the Age of AIDS*, PBS documentary looks at the U.S. response to the AIDS pandemic. Linda Ellerbee hosts. 7pm. WKNO, Channel 10 in Memphis. Info 901-458-2521. WDCN, Channel 8 in Nashville. Info 615-259-9325.

Thursday, April 13

Film *All of Me*, sponsored by Vanderbilt Lambda Association. 220 Garland Hall, Nashville. 7pm. \$1 donation. Info 615-297-5352.

Saturday, April 15

Concert *Lucie Blue Tremblay*. Regis Inn, 1220 Memorial Pkwy, N.W., Huntsville, Alabama. 7:30pm. \$10 advance, \$12 at the door. Alternative housing available. Info, tickets 615-386-9222 or 615-646-8945.

Women's Dance *Random's Spring Dance*. Beer, set-ups available. Laurel Theatre, 1538 Laurel Ave, Knoxville. 8pm. \$4. Info 615-688-3428.

Sunday, April 16

Feminist Book Circle Unitarian Universalist Church, 1808 Woodmont Blvd, Nashville. 5-7pm. Free. Info 615-297-5352.

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.

...Dennison patients HIV-free

• continued from page 1

deadly disease as the result of being splashed in the eye with contaminated blood during surgery.

State health officials refuse to comment on any investigation into the Dennison case, citing patient confidentiality.

Baptist Hospital officials are continuing their examination of operating-room records to determine if Dennison did indeed become infected with HIV in the course of duty. If that method of transmission is confirmed, Dennison would be the first surgeon stricken with the disease as the result of an operating room accident.

Current figures list eight doctors — including four surgeons — who have been diagnosed with AIDS and whose infection mode has not been "definitively" documented. Those eight physicians have been listed in an

"undetermined risk" category, according to the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control (CDC). CDC records also show some 18 cases nationwide of other health care workers who have contracted HIV through occupational exposure to the virus, mainly through accidental needlesticks. However, CDC asserts that the risk to health care workers is less than one percent.

Dennison's death from *pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia brought about renewed pleas for universal seropositivity testing at Baptist Hospital. Sources there privately have indicated that such testing will be the rule at the hospital in April, following a vote by the hospital's staff physicians.

If the plan is implemented, all patients at Baptist will routinely have samples of their blood tested for the presence of HIV antibodies. •

...state sodomy law

• continued from page 1

Advance has been actively lobbying lawmakers on Capitol Hill since last September when the Commission's report was made public. To finance lobbying efforts, Advance has solicited donations nationwide through advertisements in the national lesbian and gay newsmagazine *The Advocate*, in the Boston-based *Gay Community News* and in *Dare*, garnering contributions "from Seattle to Cam-

bridge," Burks said. The group has also had several small fundraising events, with more elaborate benefits in the works.

"It is encouraging to see people from all over the country support an effort that will affect only people in Tennessee," she added. "It's given me a real sense of pride to see that our cause is really a universal one and that our community responds regardless of where it's happening." •

BRIEFS

from STAFF REPORTS

Three states may protect les/gay rights

LESBIAN AND GAY CIVIL RIGHTS BILLS HAVE GOTTEN THROUGH THEIR FIRST rounds in the legislatures of both Connecticut and Massachusetts. The Connecticut State Assembly will hear debate soon after the body's Judiciary Committee voted 15-11 in favor of a bill banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Activist Betty Gallo said that she believes the bill will pass this year, although she noted that opposition to the measure is also better organized than in the past.

A Massachusetts House committee approved a lesbian and gay civil rights bill, which will now go to the Massachusetts State Legislature for the 16th time. Former National Organization for Women president Eleanor Smeal, now president of the Fund for a Feminist Majority, told the committee, "Failure to pass [this bill] creates a climate in which bigotry raises its ugly head."

Meanwhile, Iowa lesbian and gay activists report that there is a good chance the state legislature will pass a bill that would outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. According to Equal Time, Iowa may very well become the second state to pass such a law. The bill's lead sponsor, state Rep. Tom Jochum (D-Dubuque), is an increasingly-powerful politician who is likely to be the next speaker of the state House of Representatives. The antidiscrimination measure is accompanied by a bill adding sexual orientation to the state's hate crimes law. "The two bills are tied together," Jochum said. "The hate crimes bill show the need for the civil rights bill and creates an opportunity to talk about what's happening." •

Principal nixes display of AIDS project

WAVELAND, MISSISSIPPI, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL JAMES BALDREE prevented fifth-grader Angela Eades' project on AIDS from appearing in the school's science fair.

Baldree refused to allow teachers, parents or students to see the project because he was afraid it would lead to discussion of AIDS and how it is transmitted.

"Students are required to verbally defend their projects for the judges and we felt it would be a severe imposition to expect judges to have to question a 10-year-old girl about such a project," which Baldree said was "sexually explicit."

The project, a pegboard with the legend "AIDS" in red letters and copies of magazine articles pasted on it, won Eades a blue ribbon and an "A". The articles included information on the transmission of AIDS, listing sexual contact, shared needles and syringes, infected blood and blood products and transmission from pregnant women to their babies as the primary means of transmission. Two teachers decided the display did not meet the science fair's rules, which prohibit projects on vertebrate animals or physical matters relating to humans.

"We have no problem with [the school officials'] actions; they had to follow the rules. But if those rules are going to shield our children from reality, that's not very scientific," Eades' mother, Teona Eades, said. •

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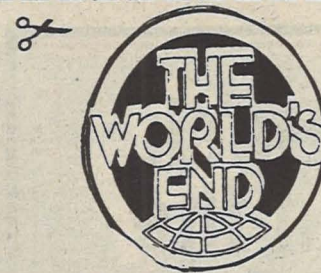
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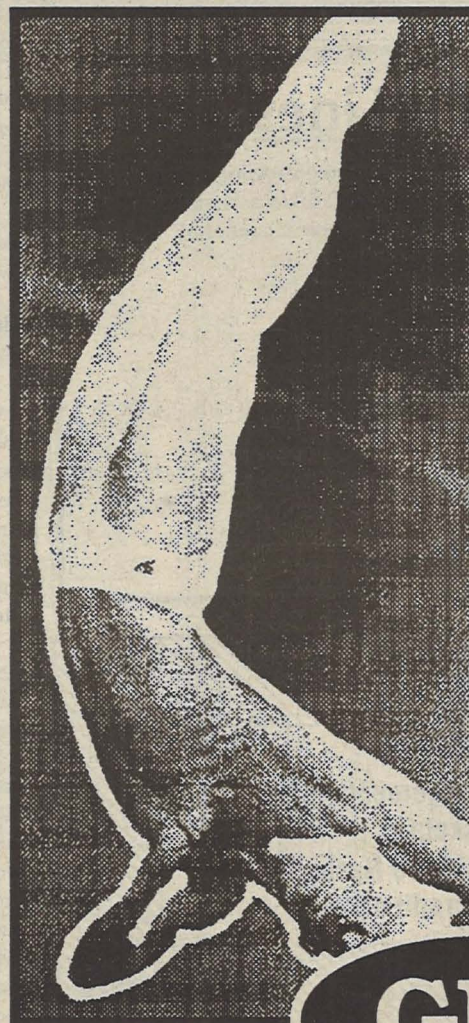
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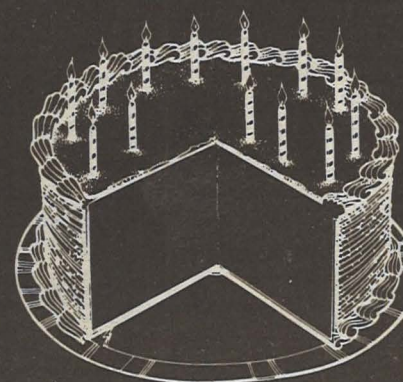
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Between the Lines

GCN/Nashville's monthly magazine of local events premieres April 4 and 8.

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ALIX DOBKIN: "...DISSENTER TYPE, argumentative. A troublemaker," according to a 1967 FBI memorandum. A cornerstone of the women's music industry, according to many lesbians. Courageous and controversial, according to most.

The well-known lesbian musician made her Tennessee debut this week when she performed for audiences in Memphis, Nashville and Knoxville. Dobkin, a favorite for many years at women's music festivals, lives in Woodstock, N.Y.

Her performances take her not only around the country but also around the globe. Last year, Dobkin toured Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland and Ireland, performing her own style of music, a combination of folk, pop and even rap songs about women in general, lesbians in particular.

After coming out in the early '70s, Dobkin produced, along with Kay Gardner, the classic LP of women's music *Lavender Jane Loves Women*. Since then, Dobkin has recorded four more albums, including her latest for North Carolina's Ladyslipper Music, *These Women/ Never Been Better*.

Dare staff writer Deborah Burks caught up with Dobkin Sunday afternoon and talked with her about her music and her politics.

Burks: How did you come to make a career of music, particularly women's music?

Dobkin: I started out as a professional folk singer in the '60s. I hung out with people like Bob Dylan and Kris Kristofferson, but I couldn't see anywhere to go with it. So, I retired for a few years and quit playing guitar and writing. That was when I was married and while I was pregnant. I started practicing guitar again every day, which is something I haven't stopped since.

When I became involved in a CR (consciousness raising) group in 1971 and got into feminism, I started writing songs about my life and my own transformation. I separated from my husband and came out as a lesbian six months later.

My music essentially led me to the life I currently have. That's how I began writing women's music: I made a decision to only do the things which felt good for me and all of a sudden there were no men in my life. I had a vision of myself singing to an audience of women. I saw a sea of women's faces and I thought, "This is for me."

It changed everything for me. I could say I made a decision to do women's music, but it was actually made for me.

You have a reputation as a separatist and for years your policy has been to perform only to

women. Recently you changed that policy and are now playing for mixed-gender audiences. What led you to make that change?

I made that decision about four years ago and it was partially based on the fact that I couldn't make a living playing to just women. But more importantly, I wanted to be able to reach more people with my message. I consider myself an educator and I wanted to be able to teach more people.

I will never stop doing women-only concerts. They are still my favorite. They still have the best energy. But I do want to supplement them with other kinds of concerts. I've had some wonderful mixed concerts.

But your policy at women's music festivals is still no boy children in the audience. Why?

For one thing, boys don't like my concerts. They don't like being with all those women talking about women. They get bored and distracting. I also don't want to worry about their feeling when I sing things like "no penis between us."

Our lesbian culture is generally not a place for boy children. I mean there is room for families but by and large it's not. Women-only space is sacred and that means no boy children. And it's no favor to him to bring a boy to a concert where he'll be resented.

What do you think lesbians have to share or to teach the rest of society that can really make a difference?

We have our unique perspective as outsiders, outsiders who represent every race, every culture, every region, every tradition. We are outside the culture.

All women are outside the patriarchal cul-



Lesbian singer/songwriter Alix Dobkin made her Tennessee debut this week promoting her new album from North Carolina's Ladyslipper Music, *These Women/ Never Been Better*.

I N T E R

Alix Dobkin



ut this past week in Memphis, Nashville and Knoxville concerts
ese Women/Never Been Better. — DARE PHOTO BY ROBIN CONOVER

V I E W

obkin

ture, but we are especially so in choosing to love women. We have to teach the world how to love women and to teach women how to love themselves. We teach values of harmony, of mature relationships, of peace.

In getting involved in issues that affect women's lives, lesbians go the farthest and the deepest. We are teachers. Lesbians are in the leadership of so many causes, of things that represent advanced thinking which have to contain some feminism or knowledge of women's lives. And lesbians know this the best.

Do you believe that feminism is the theory and lesbianism is the practice?

Yes, I think I do. It sounds glib and has been cliché for so long. But I can't think of anything to disprove it.

You've been observing the lesbian community for almost two decades. What changes have you seen in the '80s and where do you see the lesbian rights movement going?

You mean the generic, indefinable, crazy, off-the-wall lesbian community or communities? Well, there have been tremendous changes recently. I like to think there's a resurgence of lesbian spirit and magic and energy in the world.

Many lesbians have been dealing with recovery. So many lesbians in the past five years have been taking care of themselves. We've been trying to get ourselves in some place where we can act. I think that has to do with the prominence of therapy and a desire to get healthy and strong.

Now I see the beginnings of a movement everywhere to come out and start doing stuff.

It's a generalized impression, but I've noticed a resurgence of lesbian consciousness.

The lesbian separatist anthology *For Lesbians Only* just came out. There's the Lesbian Agenda Conference. Things are really starting to happen after many years of being quiet and being involved in other causes. So many homophobic, anti-separatist attitudes have been circulating.

And there was all that coalition work in the early '80s. That's fine and coalition work has its place, but I will say this: don't forget who you are. That's what happened with women getting involved in other causes. But lesbians are now getting a sense of who we are.

Particularly speaking, don't you think lesbians and gay men have to work together to advance the movement? How do lesbians do it without fragmenting their energy?

Yes, we do have to work together on some things, like all the lesbians who are working on AIDS issues. We have to keep our own agenda in mind.

We've now had a little practice at developing the skill of getting involved without losing ourselves. We're learning that in relationships, aren't we? When lesbians do things, when we do business or our culture of relationships, we do it 100%.

Your songs like *Lesbian Code* reflect a desire to collect and define lesbian culture. How do you find a common thread without homogenizing?

Most of the things I've come up with weren't found because I was looking for them. I was just there. I never expected to be able to identify this thread. Just the fact that lesbians collect the same kind of stuff demonstrates a connection with the values of indigenous people.

The values of the lesbian community are in line with the harmony of the earth and peace with each other. We all share this to one degree or another, but we each have variations of it.

This is your first trip to Tennessee. Do you see a difference in Southern audiences?

I do think Southern audiences are warmer. They're very receptive. The crowd here was very responsive for a first audience. When I go to a new place, people don't know how to respond because they've never heard anyone say the things I say on stage.

What are your plans for the future? Do you have a book or collection of essays planned or just more music?

I am getting a word processor, but I don't have any plans for it yet. I will continue doing the work I love: being with lesbians. •

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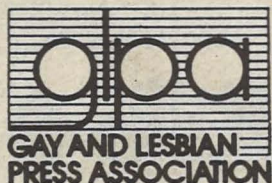
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Chicken hawks and sex stings

by STUART BIVIN
Editor

ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT parts of any newspaper editor's job is deciding what to include. What stories should we cover? What letters should we print? What features are appropriate? Should we print stories about chicken hawks and sex stings?

This newspaper's most important mission is to provide timely, accurate information to Tennessee's lesbian and gay community about the things that affect our lives here. And those are the things that we have a duty to cover, and cover well.

Unfortunately, some of those things that affect our lives here are sex stings, arrests for same-sex prostitution and solicitation, and judicial inquiries into same-sex pedophilia. Tennessee's heinous intrusion into our lives via the state's sodomy law is the reason these things affect us. These events are used by the unscrupulous to paint us all with the "pervert" brush, and they will be until we are able to get

"crimes against nature" off the books here.

I am not happy with the situation. But ignoring it won't make it go away. I think Dare's readers need to know when "crimes against nature" is used as a weapon in a custody battle, when police abuse children by using them as bait in teen-prostitution stings designed to round up queers, when ex-spouses get revenge by accusing homosexual mates of child molestation.

WE NEED TO KNOW what is said about us, as well as what we ourselves say. It would be really cheery if we could always give good news, if we just left out the news about chicken hawks and sex stings. But don't think anyone is going to be fooled. Mainstream newspapers report this news: they love it. And so do those on the radical religious right. It's just the ammunition they need, especially when it's reported with just a little bit of slant.

That slant is why we cover these stories, to

bring you an unbiased account of what's going on, what's being said, what's being done.

And let's not forget that there are a few in our community, in any group of humans, who are victimizers. There are child molesters. There are rapists. When they catch the public eye, it embarrasses and angers us all.

I do not identify with people who have sex with children, but our government, primarily through its sodomy statute, identifies me, indeed identifies all homosexual people, with them. We cannot fight it if we do not know it.

OF COURSE, not everyone is interested in these stories, nor is everyone pleased that we cover them. But every time some publicity-seeking D.A. gets by with nailing people for solicitation in the parks, every time the self-righteous use the existence of same-sex pedophilia to label us all, there's another brick in the walls that keep us from being truly free here.

And I am interested in that. •

SOAPBOX

Man-bating and the violence of words

by CAROLE CUNNINGHAM
Staff Writer

"You madden yourself with words: you damn yourself because it feels grand to throw oil on the flaming hell of your own temper. But when it is brought home to you; when you see the thing you have done; when it is blinding your eyes, stifling your nostrils, tearing your heart, then — then — . . ."

—George Bernard Shaw, *St. Joan*

PSYCHOLOGISTS HAVE LONG maintained that certain forms of madness are highly logical—so long as you accept the mad person's first premise. That first premise—for instance, that the Koran or the Bible is the word of God and may only be tampered with upon pain of death or that Jews are the source of the world's economic ills—when staunchly adhered to leads us to the quite logical conclusion that a writer must be assassinated, a book burned, a race exterminated.

The real "enemy" we face in these situations and others like them is not the doctrinal disorder that might spread through the Islamic world or the economic disorder that might spread through the European centers of capitalism but order itself: brutally exacting logic, actions consistent and certain as a guillotine.

Few who have followed their orderly thinking to its often inhumane conclusion have doubted for a moment the justice of their cause: accepting unquestioningly the first premise of any argument could easily lead our society to the gallows or the gas chambers. Who goes in the gas chambers and who stays out is arbitrary and rather beside the question. The tragedy is not that murderers burned human beings at the stake or in gas chambers, but that common, pious people, in their righteousness, committed unspeakable acts.

No one is exempt from this self-righteous thinking. If we are foolish enough to believe that only fifteenth-century Catholics or modern Muslims make the fatal mistake of condemning a race, a religion or gender to death,

the next death warrant signed may be our own.

At the recent concert of self-proclaimed "manhater" Alix Dobkin, I was shocked to hear the calm rhetoric of hate (the rhetoric of death) coming from the lips of one of "my own."

AS ALIX DOBKIN MOURNED on stage the passing of that era in which it was "okay" to hate men and encouraged the women assembled to exercise their "right to hate," the stench I smelled in the air and the knot I felt in my stomach came from the spreading sickness of hate, of intolerance. The audience's applause told me that the women listening were taking her words seriously—the problem was that they weren't taking them seriously enough.

A priest talking to the inquisitors in Shaw's play *St. Joan* says "I tell my folks they must be very careful. I say to them, 'If you only saw what you think about you would think quite differently about it. It would give you a great shock. Oh, a great shock.'" I wonder what a shock it would be for me, for you, for Alix Dobkin, to see the logical conclusion of her rhetoric of hate. She condemns male violence on one hand, but advocates violence against males on the other. She does not believe certain males or certain acts of males to be symbols of what we all abhor, but the very source of what we abhor.

JEWS, IN THE EYES OF THE NAZIS, were not mere symbols of modern evil but its very source. The abuses of capitalism, the exploitation of the working class, the class war itself—all were ascribed to the Jewish presence in Germany. To free culture of such influences required the Jews' destruction. Hitler said, "The Jew must be cleared out of Europe. Otherwise no understanding will be possible between Europeans. It is the Jew who prevents everything."

Substitute "men" and "women" for "Jew" and "German" for the same equation: "men

must be cleared out of the women's community. Otherwise no understanding will be possible between women. It is men who prevent (and preempt) everything."

IF, AS SHAW SAID, WE WERE all forced to see the conclusions of what we think, we might well think differently. The danger in Dobkin's thinking, or Khomeini's, is its very lack of ambiguity, its refusal to accept difference, its sacrifice of dialogue for monologue.

Those who speak with the certainty of the inquisitor are likely making, in the words of Grahame Greene, "a cruel parody of what they intend." If we intend to find something different than the world created from male violence, we will hardly find it by exterminating half the human race in our fervor: the blood on our hands will be as red as that on the Nazis'.

Listening to Dobkin, someone who calls herself a proponent of women's causes, I felt sick and ashamed—ashamed to be a lesbian because the lesbian on stage said she spoke for me. It was impossible to avoid the conclusion during her performance that I was both contaminated by and responsible for what I heard. Violence is not limited to rape, war, murder—the violence of words and ideas is but the foreplay to the slaughter.

Hate is a double-edged sword that always cuts two ways, and the hatred spread by this brand of "feminist" thinking does as much to slaughter women as it does men. What we need is the glint of a sword that provides a reflection of our own violence, not simply the violence of the "other." Obliterating the "other" we obliterate a part of ourselves; worse, we destroy the source of that crucial reflection that keeps our aims and our causes in perspective. History sadly records the repeated failures of men to observe that reflection, to speak in dialogue with the "other"; the challenge of feminism and of humanity (male and female) is to avoid that costly error. •

PAGES

Eighty-Sixed

Eighty-Sixed, by David B. Feinberg. New York: Viking, 1989. 326 pp. \$18.95, hardcover.

reviewed by **STUART BIVIN**
Editor

DAVID FEINBERG HAS MADE A MAJOR breakthrough in the literature of AIDS. His new novel *Eighty-Sixed* deals with the disease as a fact of life in the '80s without the maudlin whining that has characterized the genre so far.

It goes without saying that the very existence of a literature of AIDS is sobering. No other time, no other disease, has produced such social battering of the sufferers of a disease. The pain of suffering rejection where there should be compassion has given rise to a dark and hopeless body of fiction.

People with AIDS have, in contrast, faced their lot with courage, with humor and with hope — hope for a cure, of course, hope for the prospect of defeating the disease and the bigotry that uses the disease as an excuse to kick those who are down, and hope for living life in the most meaningful way possible.

The genre is finally maturing, though. Finally, with *Eighty-Sixed*, an author has captured the spirit of the AIDS community.

Feinberg sets the scene with an account of gay male life in New York in 1980 (which he subtitles "Ancient History"). The baths, the bars, the brief encounters all come to life in his month-to-month tales of how it was.

What you won't find here is any preaching, any blame-the-victim moralizing. You will find a personal, warm and funny story of clones, of boy-chasing, of looking for love. Feinberg tells the story, warts and all, with no attempt to do anything other than recreate the experience.

Each monthly installment is followed by a short, pertinent impertinence, like the hysterically funny "How to Get Rid of the Trick Who Won't Leave," which suggests such tactics as these can't-fail suggestions:

When you shower after sex, be sure to give him a towel you have sprinkled with itching powder. As he dries, mention the case of crabs you're almost positive you're over.

Ask him if he loves you.

Talk to him in baby talk. "Does ootems want a widdle nap? Does ootems want to go sweep?"

Ask for reassurance every five minutes. Apologize profusely.

THE SECOND HALF OF THE NOVEL picks up with 1986. Things have changed. Friends and lovers are dropping like flies. The sexual merry-go-round has ground to a halt. Everyone is scared. And many rise to the challenge.

Back rooms are replaced by gyms, anonymous sex by working out, poppers by sprout sandwiches as health becomes the rage. This is

no propaganda piece, though. Feinberg gives us jerks to rail at, and AIDSphobia, and real suffering, the meaningless, despairing kind.

Although quickie sex has become dangerous, the quest for love rolls on. And it's the spark of that quest that keeps *Eighty-Sixed* out of the doldrums. AIDS has robbed us of friends, lovers, family and acquaintances. An entire way of life has vanished. But we still have love, and we can still laugh. And that's what's kept us going through the plague, through government and medical indifference, through "God's-punishment-for-queers" and Kaposi's sarcoma.

Feinberg's between-the-chapters vignettes continue into the second half of the book, and keep up the gentle self-mockery, like "Safe Sex in the Age of Anxiety":

Cover your mouth with adhesive tape and then do the same to your partner. Insert sterilized butt-plugs in the correct orifice and tape over. You may, if you prefer, use duct tape instead (obtainable at your local hardware outlet). Insert each penis into an opaque, reservoir-end, prelubricated prophylactic. Be sure to coat gener-

ously with a water-based, nonoxynol-9 lubricant. Secure with a strong adhesive. For added security, a Hefty industrial-strength Steel-Sak may be taped over the rubber.

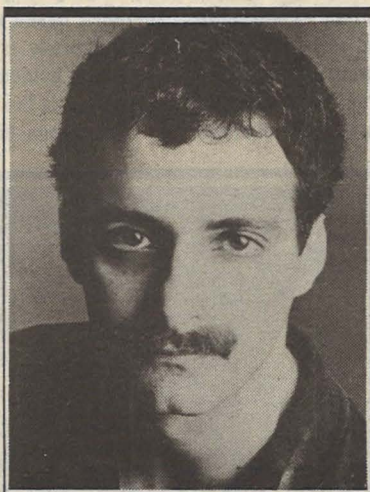
Eighty-Sixed is not necessarily upbeat, although it is a comedy of sorts. Face it: AIDS is not a pretty way to die. Feinberg recognizes that, and makes no effort whatsoever to gloss over the pain of slow, near-certain death. The title itself, after all, comes from restaurant slang for food that is "dead," beyond resuscitation.

WHAT FEINBERG DOES with *Eighty-Sixed* is humanize the epidemic. He scales the numbers to a human, personal level with his account of what it has done to pro-

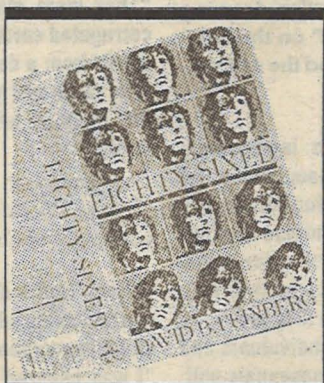
tagonist B.J. Rosenthal's life. Feinberg has said that he is not altogether pleased with the tone of the second half: "Today, *Eighty-Sixed* would have a more hopeful ending; at the time I wrote it, I felt it would be dishonest not to end on a bleak note."

Although the ending is not funny, it isn't bleak, and it doesn't mar the book. It is, instead, believable and honest. There are not many books about AIDS that can make that claim.

Eighty-Sixed is a tribute to the human spirit and its ability to overcome pain and adversity. It is a tribute to the response of the community to our own. Most of all, it is a tribute to the courage and resilience of people with AIDS. •



David Feinberg



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• **PRIVATE THERAPY** Mary Jane Thompson, M.A. 615-264-3717.

• **PLEASE NOTICE** our new phone number: 615-327-DARE [327-3273]. Our mailing address is still the same: Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204-0422.

• Help fight proposed new homophobic changes in the law. Donate to, volunteer for, Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance. Advance, Box 24181, Nashville, TN 37202.

• Catch our new look! Watch GCN/Nashville Tuesdays at 9pm, Saturdays at 8pm. On Nashville's Cable 35.

• **LONG HOURS. HARD WORK. NO PAY.** Dare is accepting applications from writers. Learn community-oriented journalism, and be one of the best. Dare, Box 40422, Nashville, 37204 or phone 615-292-9623.

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• It is the sharp intake and holding of breath the moment the music begins. The patience — and impatience — of waiting for snow.

• The weather prods, the body remembers. I miss our walks and talks.

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Q U O T E S

Loose lips

"Just say 'no' to fairies."

—Terry Hopkins, WLAC-FM radio (Nashville, 105.9) morning personality, during an exchange Monday with co-host Phil Valentine about the telecast Sunday of *Peter Pan*. The remark followed jokes about Peter Pan (played by Mary Martin) being "J.R.'s mother" (Martin's son is Larry Hagman, who plays J.R. Ewing on the TV series *Dallas*) and the possibility of Peter Pan offering schoolchildren "pixie dust."

"More people will die from AIDS than from assault rifles in this country during 1989.

"However, when it was suggested that those with this disease should be quarantined as one of the means of slowing the spread of infection the liberals in this country went stark, raving mad. "...Conservative white males constitute the single group in America today whose rights are considered expendable."

— Ronald Jordan McCool, in a letter to the editor of *The Tennessean* about the "unfairness" of proposals to ban semi-automatic rifles.

"All I ever hear from the black and feminist community [sic] is that 'we need this to correct the inequities of American society.' To them I say '\$%&'&!"

— B.J. Baugher, former president of Vanderbilt Students for America, in a letter to the editor of the *Vanderbilt Hustler* decrying "quotas" that had been "forced" on the business community by "the ERA and the Affirmative Action movements."

"Interestingly enough, it seems increasingly less fashionable these days for people to make public pronouncements condemning homosexuality. Certainly, this trend will continue as more and more gay people walk out of the closet and shatter our preconceptions about who they are, how they act, and how numerous they are. "...I think the efforts of various individuals and groups to deny civil rights to homosexuals will one day seem as incredible and shocking as the efforts of segregationists (just thirty years ago) do today."

— Michael McCrickard, in a letter to the editor of the *Vanderbilt Hustler* rebutting John Kudlman's previous letter condemning attempts to add sexual orientation to the school's anti-discrimination statement.

"To consider productive, respectable members of society as simply 'the disgusting varieties of homosexuality' is to portray oneself as ignorant and ill-informed.

"A sexual orientation clause could help open the airways, promoting an atmosphere in which non-gays could come to understand people they will inevitably meet in the course of their lives. If a University cannot prepare its members to handle

the future in an educated, informed manner, it is not doing its job. Mr. Kudlman, Vanderbilt is trying to do its job. Let it."

— Katy Dobson, in a letter to the editor of the *Vanderbilt Hustler*.

"I am sorry if Vanderbilt's attempt to catch up with the rest of the country in its nondiscrimination against people whose sexual orientation — not preference, or perversion, as you called it — is homosexual. The policy may "trod on your reputation," but it will really only affect the students and those employed by Vanderbilt University.

"By saying they won't discriminate against someone based upon their sexual orientation, the University is by no means condoning or promoting homosexuality, it is merely granting homosexuals the basic human right of existing on this campus. It is saying no one can be fired or

denied admission as a student solely on the basis of something that is a fundamental part of their personality and being. No one is asking you to like or (God forbid) be friends with a homosexual. You can call them sinner till the day you die, but it doesn't give you the right to take away their rights as humans."

— Margaret Coble, in a letter to the editor of the



The cast of the new Memphis production of Mort Crowley's classic play *The Boys in the Band*. — PHOTO COURTESY VINCENT ASTOR

Vanderbilt Hustler.

"They were standing behind some goddamn corrugated cardboard Greek columns I had borrowed from a department store and had draped with yards and yards of goddamn cheesecloth. Oh, Mary, it takes a fairy to make something pretty."

— Emory, in Mart Crowley's 1968 play *The Boys in the Band*, telling how he overheard gossip about himself at his high school prom.

"Thank God I don't have to live another day worried about where affluent Southern gays find suitable company.

"I was cheered to read that the best and the brightest of them gravitate 'almost naturally' (well put) to one another. And I was consoled to learn that all this natural gravitating frees them to devote just scads of time and energy to buying swords and dreaming about balls."

— Judith Buford, in a letter to the editor of *Southern Magazine* about the magazine's piece on Birmingham's "A-Gays" and their Apollo Ball.

"About the only thing I care to read about gays in Birmingham is how fast they are dying of AIDS. Writing about gays as if they were some kind of exotic social group, instead of the spreaders of life-threatening disease and moral corruption, is too much for me."

— David Stankard, in a letter to the editor of *Southern Magazine*.

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