

## Tennessee legislature passes new ban on homosexual acts

*Governor expected to sign overhaul of state criminal code*

by JEFF ELLIS  
Managing Editor

Sweeping changes in Tennessee's criminal code will become law Nov. 1 if, as expected, Gov. Ned McWherter signs the massive package overhauling the state's sentencing standards.

Both houses of the state legislature gave their approval to the changes in the state's criminal code as proposed by members of the Tennessee Sentencing Commission (TSC). The TSC, charged with "eliminating archaic language" from the state's criminal code, issued its recommendations in a report issued last fall.

Members of the state senate and house of representatives, after much debate on the various points of the bill, gave their approval just prior to the adjournment of their 1989 legislative session.

The newly-adopted statute concerning the state's "sodomy law" changes the current prohibition against "crimes against nature" to a specific ban on all homosexual acts. Since the crimes against nature statute has rarely been invoked against heterosexual acts, TSC members said the legislature should make the law more specific if the state is attempting to enforce the ban on homosexual acts.

Tennessee's criminal code currently prescribes a sentence of not less than five years and not more than 15 years to be levied against those convicted of committing a crime

against nature.

But if McWherter signs the bill into law as he has promised to do, the new statute will reduce homosexual crimes against nature to a Class C misdemeanor, carrying a sentence of not more than 30 days and/or a fine of \$25.

If the bill goes into effect on Nov. 1, Tennessee will join five other states which specifically classify homosexual acts as criminal.

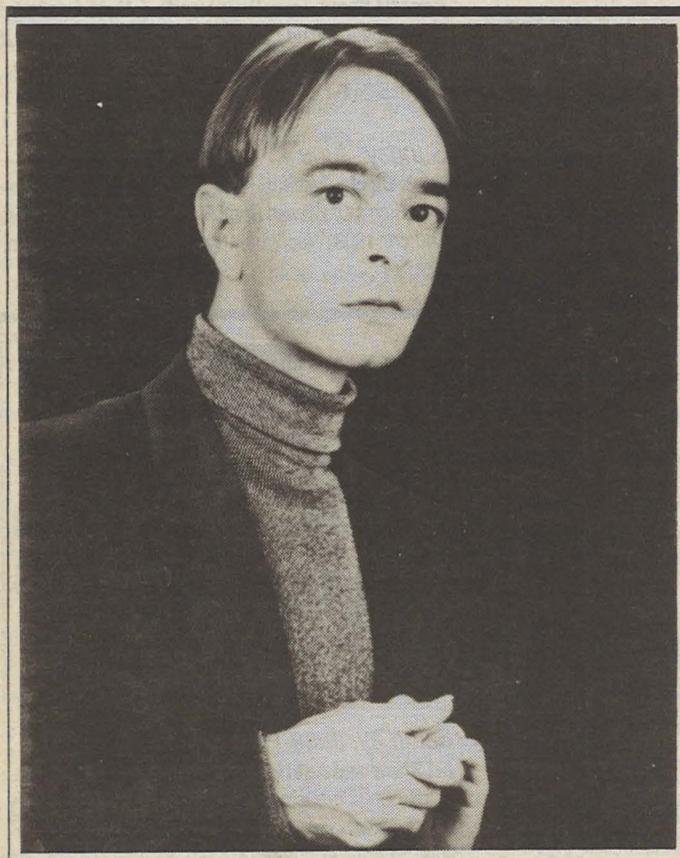
Homosexual acts are misdemeanors in Texas, Arkansas and Kansas. Montana and Nevada statutes classify such acts as felonies.

More than half of the United States classify sodomy or crimes against nature — either homosexual or heterosexual — as felonies.

Sources on Capitol Hill earlier had told *Dare* that some legislators were willing to strike the sodomy statute from the code. However, following a marathon session earlier this month to hammer out final compromises in the bill, the ban on homosexual acts remained intact.

Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA) had lobbied legislators throughout their 1989 session to make changes in the proposed revisions.

Most of the attention of the public and the media focused on proposals designed to alleviate current overcrowding in Tennessee correctional facilities. •



Gary Indiana, author of *Horse Crazy*. The new novel examines sex in the Eighties through a New York writer, his obsession with a paranoid heroin addict and the imminent death, from AIDS, of a former lover. — PHOTO BY ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE

## Federal court jury views gay s/m films in Bijou obscenity trial

by JEFF ELLIS  
Managing Editor

Testimony continues this week in the Nashville federal court pornography trial of three Chicago businessmen charged with distributing obscene materials through the mail.

This week's proceedings follow a week of testimony and film-viewing that prompted U.S. District Judge John T. Nixon to provide airline-type flight sickness bags for jury members.

The twelve members of the federal court

jury last week viewed four films — *Erotic Hands*, *The Final Chapter of Mistress Ann*, *You Said a Mouthful* and *Please, Sir* — produced and distributed by Chicago-based Bijou Video Sales, operated by the defendants Steve Tushin, Sean O'Connor and Randy Larsen. Jurors were questioned prior to the trial about their attitudes toward homosexuality and intercourse.

A fourth defendant, David Rosen, the New York-based director of the films, pleaded guilty to his role in distributing videocassettes

of the films in the Midstate area and agreed to testify against the other defendants.

According to Rosen's testimony, homosexual activities depicted in the films are real and not simulated. Rosen, referred to as "the Alfred Hitchcock of porn," said he recruited individuals to appear in the one-hour, color films.

"Through my association with different people in the adult sado-masochistic community throughout the United States, I was able to get people to show other people what their scenes were," Rosen testified.

Rosen said distribution rights to the films, • continued on page 3

## Navy suggests USS Iowa blast was lover's revenge, investigates

by STUART BIVIN

Naval Investigative Service (NIS) officials leaked reports to the media last week that NIS believes the gun turret explosion that killed 47 aboard the *USS Iowa* was caused by a sailor trying to murder his former lover.

The reports said that gunner's mate second class Clayton Hartwig, 24, one of those killed in the blast, had named gunner's mate third class Kendall Truitt, 21, beneficiary of Hartwig's \$100,000 life-insurance policy. The reports said that the policy was taken out at a time when the two were "inseparable friends."

Hartwig had told another friend, six months

before the explosion, that he feared Truitt might try to kill him. The sailors's friendship had ended at about that time.

Truitt has denied the reports, and threatened to sue NIS for leaking the stories. He was transferred away from Norfolk by the Navy, which said it was doing so to protect him from sailors who blamed him for the explosion after the story leaked.

In a statement to the Newport *Daily Press*, Truitt said that he is not gay, that he and Hartwig were "just good friends," and that NIS had used him as a scapegoat for its failure to find the cause of the blast. •

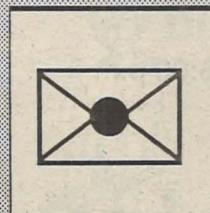
## I N S I D E

*Dare this week*

Previews and reviews of new books  
*Pages*, page 5.



Doing something about homophobic radio,  
*Box 40422*, page 10.



Now tell us something we didn't know, Elton.  
*Quotes*, page 12.





STONEWALL 20

▼ **PRIDE GUIDE** Nashville Pride Week '89

**Saturday, June 17**

▼ **ART AUCTION**

6:30 p.m. Sale and Exhibition

7:30 p.m. Auction

Gas Lite Lounge, 167-1/2 Eighth Avenue North  
Information ☎ 615 320-0288

**Saturday, June 24**

▼ **PARADE, RALLY and CONCERT**

2:00 p.m. Parade Line-up

Fannie Mae Dees Park, 24th Ave South and Blakemore

3:00 p.m. Parade Step-off

4:00 p.m. Rally, Centennial Park Bandshell

Keynote speaker **Renée McCoy**, Executive Director

National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays

6:00 p.m. Outdoor Concert, Centennial Park Bandshell

**Deidre McCalla**

Information ☎ 615 297-4293

**Sunday, June 25**

▼ **PRIDE PICNIC**

1:00 p.m. Potluck and BYOBeverage

Edwin Warner Park Site #10

▼ **FOR PETE'S SAKE**

Benefit for Nashville AIDS service organizations

6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Pre-event "Circle of Friends" reception with

**Janis Ian**, Cakewalk Restaurant

\$150 per person, \$250 per couple

7:00 - 9:00 p.m. **Janis Ian Sings**, Slice of Life Restaurant

\$25 minimum donation

Information and reservations ☎ 615 269-7552

**Monday, June 26 - Sunday, July 9**

▼ **NAMES PROJECT QUILT**

Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Sunday Noon - 6:00 p.m.

Benton Chapel, Vanderbilt University

Information ☎ 615 386-9211 or 615 269-7552

▼ Pride Week '89 needs volunteers: coordinators, security, stage crew, sales, promotion and much more. Please join us at our weekly planning meetings, Sundays at 1:00 p.m. To volunteer or just to find out more, phone ☎ 615 297-4293.

**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** (ACDA) 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** ARC/AID. Support Group. 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. 7:30pm. Info 615-320-0288.

**Tuesdays**

**Nashville CARES** HIV+ Support Group. 6pm. 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** Newcomers Group. 6pm. Info 615-385-1510.

**Thursdays**

**Incest Survivors Anonymous** Closed women's meeting, First Church Unity, Franklin Rd. 6:30pm.

**Nashville CARES** Visualization Group. 7:15pm. Info 615-385-1510.

**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**

**Sexuals 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**

**Incest Survivors Anonymous** Open meeting, First Church Unity, Franklin Rd. 5:30pm.

**Metropolitan Community Church** Community Dinner, all you can eat. 7:30pm. \$5. Info 615-320-0288.

**Gay Cable Network** Viacom Channel 35 (Community Access Television). 8pm.

**Sundays**

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

**Incest Survivors Anonymous** Closed meeting, First Church Unity, Franklin Rd. 6pm.

**Special Events**

**Saturday, June 3 - Sunday, June 4**

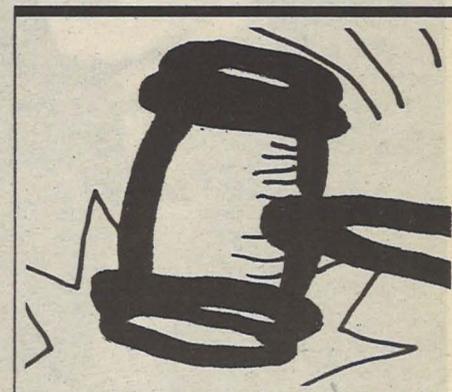
**Yard Sale** To benefit the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA). Donations accepted. 8am-5pm. 1401 Cedar, Nashville. Info 615-297-4293.

**Tuesday, June 6**

**Benefit Show** Tracy Day presents *A Night Among the Stars*. Cover and tip benefit Nashville CARES. Shows at 9pm and 11:30pm. 111 8th Av North, Nashville. \$3 cover. Info 615-244-7256.

**Sunday, June 11**

**Book Circle** Feminist Book Circle discussion of Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born*. First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1808 Woodmont Blvd, Nashville. 5pm-7pm. Free.



**Saturday, June 17**

**Art Show and Auction** To benefit Metropolitan Community Church/Nashville and AIDS Southern Kentucky (ASK). At Gas Lite Lounge, 167-1/2 8th Ave North, Nashville. Sale and exhibition, 6:30pm, auction, 7:30pm. Info 615-320-0288.

**Sunday, June 18**

**Gay Pride Fest** Celebration of gay pride. Mud Island, Memphis. Sponsored by Memphis Gay Coalition. Cook-out, volleyball, booths. Free. Info and tickets 901-324-GAYS.

**Saturday, June 24**

**Parade** Nashville Pride Week '89 parade. Gather at 2pm at Fannie Mae Dees Park, 24th Ave and Blakemore, Nashville. Step-off at 3pm. Route follows Blakemore to Natchez Trace to Centennial Park. Info 615-297-4293.

**Rally** Nashville Pride Week '89 rally. Centennial Park bandshell, Nashville. Keynote speaker Renée McCoy, executive director, National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays. Entertainment, crafts, food, local speakers and a special awards presentation. Free. 4pm. Info 615-297-4293.

**Concert** Nashville Pride Week '89 concert. Olivia records artist Deidre McCalla. Centennial Park bandshell, Nashville. Free. 6pm. Info 615-297-4293.

**River Ride** Mississippi River cruise featuring Joyce Cobb benefits Memphis Gay Coalition. \$15. Tickets at Star Search Video, 1264 Madison, Memphis. Info 901-324-GAYS.

**Your nonprofit event can be listed free in Dates. Write to Dare, Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204-0422, or phone 615 327-3273 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.**

## ...obscenity trial

• continued from page 1

produced at a cost of \$1,000 to \$1,500 each, were sold to Toushin's company for \$1,700 to \$2,500 each. He further testified that Toushin had contributed a number of suggestions for the films.

"He (Toushin) said the films needed more sex," Rosen said. "He also told me there was a market for films that featured defecation."

Toushin, O'Connor and Larsen are accused of running one of the nation's largest mail-order pornography businesses from their Chicago theater. The men are charged in a federal indictment with aiding and abetting the national distribution of pornographic materials through the U.S. mail.

The men admit they distributed the film, but deny that they are obscene. In determining obscenity, jurors must decide if local community standards deem the films offensive, designed to arouse obscene desires and lacking artistic and scientific value.

In his opening remarks, defense attorney David Rudolph told the jurors that federal obscenity laws target offensive sexual activities and do not refer to the "whips, chains, hypodermic needles and excrement" depicted in the films.

"What you will find offensive in these films is not the sexual conduct, but the violence, brutality and degradation," Rudolph said. "But

violence, no matter how brutal or disgusting, is not legally obscene."

The charges resulted from a 1985 complaint filed by the late Richard Kemp of Nashville, who told postal inspectors he had received flyers from Toushin's mail-order business on at least two occasions.

Complaints filed some time later in Salt Lake City, Utah, against Toushin's business prompted postal inspectors there to contact local authorities who, in turn, ordered videotapes from the mail-order departments of the two Chicago-based businesses, headquartered in the Bijou Theatre.

Local sources have told Dare that Kemp, who lived in the heavily-gay Edgefield neighborhood of east Nashville, was "extremely ill" at the time the complaints were filed. It is believed that his sister, with whom he was staying during his illness, intercepted his mail and filed the complaints on her brother's behalf.

"Apparently Kemp's name was on some sort of gay mailing list which Toushin bought to use for distributing his flyers," said Nashville attorney Don Dawson, defense counsel for Rosen.

If found guilty of violating federal obscenity laws, the defendants face a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a possible \$250,000 fine on each of the counts. •

## BRIEFS

from STAFF REPORTS

### San Francisco OKs domestic partner law

SAN FRANCISCO'S Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a law Monday that recognizes homosexual and unmarried heterosexual domestic relationships. The 10-0 vote approved an ordinance that allows unmarried couples to register as domestic partners regardless of their sexual orientation. Supervisors then urged Mayor Art Agnos to extend health benefits to city employees' domestic partners. •

### Hyde arrested for AIDS education

NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN TASK FORCE staffer Sue Hyde was arrested last week for taping up a city health department AIDS education poster in a Washington, D.C., bus. The poster, one of a series promoting condom use, was one of 25,000 produced at a cost of \$650,000 by the D.C. health department and approved by Mayor Marion Barry.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, which operates public transit services in D.C., Maryland and Virginia, refused to display the posters because, saying that the posters were "in bad taste."

Hyde and other members of OUT!, a Washington lesbian and gay activist group, had just come from a meeting of the city council, where they had placed condoms of bananas and displayed the same poster that Hyde tried to put up on the bus.

Hyde told *Dare* that the undercover Metro police officer who arrested her said, "You just got on the wrong bus." Hyde responded with, "No, I got on the right one." •

### HIV+ immigration ban relaxed

IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION Service officials announced last week that HIV-positive persons will now be allowed to enter the U.S. under certain conditions.

HIV-infected foreign travelers will qualify for a waiver and be allowed to enter the U.S. for up to 30 days if they meet standards for waivers currently available to persons with "dangerous, contagious" illness and are visiting "close family members," "conducting temporary business," or attending "academic or health related activities," according to the *Washington Blade*.

The policy statement comes after the controversy over INS officials' refusal to allow Paul Verhoef, a Dutch AIDS educator, to enter the U.S. to attend a conference on AIDS, until Verhoef got a court order allowing him to enter. •

### Maine just misses anti-bias bill

MAINE ACTIVISTS MISSED approval by only four votes this week of a measure that would prohibit sexual orientation discrimination in that state. The state's House passed the bill, for the first time since it was introduced twelve years ago, before it was defeated in the Senate.

Massachusetts activists expect that state's legislature to pass the nation's second lesbian and gay rights bill before year's end, following Wisconsin's 1982 passage of such a law. •

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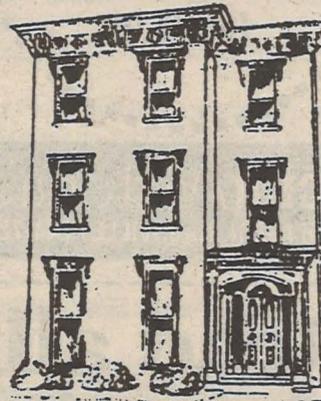
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PAGES

Horse Crazy

Horse Crazy. Gary Indiana. New York: Grove Press. \$16.95.  
 reviewed by **JOE MAROHL**  
 Staff Writer

**SEX IS AN ADDICTION.** Sex is a disease. Sex is madness. A folie à deux. These are familiar metaphors for sex in the eighties. No work of fiction has treated sexual relationships in the era of AIDS more satisfyingly and authentically than *Horse Crazy*, poet and journalist Gary Indiana's first novel. It portrays a New York writer's growing obsession with a beautiful and paranoid ex-heroin addict seven years younger than himself.

The setting is downtown Manhattan, an area that suggests squalor and vivacity at the same time. Its ambiguity suits the novel's treatment of love. Love is an unhappy contagion, and we don't get enough of it.

Sex in the eighties, Indiana suggests, is portrayed allegorically in John Carpenter's remake of *The Thing*. Dogs and human beings infected by an alien presence in the middle of an arctic wilderness explode without warning into swollen, toxic monsters. Their blood-red tentacles stretch in all directions to attack and infect others. You can trust no one nowadays. (A character in the novel reiterates the point by hanging pin-ups of Ted Bundy in his room.)

*Horse Crazy* cuts through the hysteria, self-loathing and self-pity of the usual discourse on AIDS and post-liberation sexuality. Though AIDS undeniably dominates the novel's backdrop (the protagonist's ex-lover is dying), its treatment here is implicit and understated, subsumed in a larger theme.

Destructiveness and irrationality have been at the center of all great passion, now as ever before. Sexual passion is laced with the threat of bodily harm and madness, at least according to the Greek tragic order, and the stakes, though different and terrifyingly immediate, are perhaps no higher than they were a hundred or a thousand years ago. Even before AIDS, the stories of Samson, Dido, Paolo and Francesca, Anna Karenina and Humbert Humbert taught us that falling madly in love is madness.

Passion (and this novel is about passion first and foremost) thrives on the lunatic edge of our daily lives. It cannot be shut off by just saying no or stamping its head with a warning label from the Surgeon General. The forces of nature do not conform to human standards of decency or reason. Nor are they always salubrious or safe.

In showing us that passion is nature red in tooth and claw, the protagonist's voice (which narrates) is especially compelling and authentic. The novel demonstrates the sort of painstaking filleting of personal experience one associates with the writings of Denton Welch and Henry Miller. Every phrase a precise cut into real life. It is particular and universal at the same time. The prose is witty and sometimes cynical. Indiana's sense of dialogue, given in lump paragraphs without the usual mechanics of direct quotation, expresses the social tensions of a love affair and delineates the quiddities of the characters. It is artful without being ponderously arty.

**GARY INDIANA** is comfortable with his lower Manhattan setting. He presents it to us as an incongruity, which it is, like the emotions of his characters. If Tama Janowitz conceives Downtown as a microcosm of the world, Indiana conceives it as a macrocosm of the mind. The turmoil, grit, poison and quaint loveliness of genuine feeling and intellect.

AIDS entered the American consciousness right at the time many Americans were turning back to so-called traditional values of hearth and home. After the liberationist rhetoric of the 1970s had died, the disease vindicated the capacious admonition "Better safe than sorry"—the slogan of inauthenticity. Monogamy and abstinence again achieved the status of common sense and popular wisdom. We live immune to passion or set ourselves at risk physically and emotionally. The truth is, as *Horse Crazy* affirms, AIDS is only a fraction of the total risk, which is as old as passion itself.

Summer Lights in the works

from **STAFF REPORTS**

Organizers of Nashville's Summer Lights Festival have announced new features and a star-studded lineup of entertainers for this year's event, which opened last night and continues through Sunday, June 4.

"The 1989 Festival will feature the most impressive array of performers we have ever offered Nashville," said Harry Browning, chair of the Greater Nashville Arts Foundation. "We promise the most exciting and most successful festival in the history of the event."

Now in its eighth year, Summer Lights is a celebration of art, entertainment and hospitality, attracting thousands of festival goers for a variety of music and arts events.

One of the most attractive features of Summer Lights is the variety of musical performers, which range from blues, new age, beach and jazz to gospel, pop, rock and country. Emmylou Harris will join the Nashville Symphony for the grand finale on Sunday night. Other headliners include Don Williams, New Grass Revival, Foster and Lloyd, T. Graham Brown,

Janis Ian, Hank Levine, John Hartford, the A Strings, The Establishment, Aashid, Edgar Meyer, the Snakes and Walk the West. Festival goers will be entertained by performances by dancers, actors, clowns and puppeteers.

Multiple arts exhibits will showcase the work of many of the region's visual artists. Special visual arts events include the Summer Lights Annual, a prestigious gathering of Tennessee's best contemporary artists; the Mayor's Art Auction, a Sunday afternoon public sale of entries from "The Subject is Nashville" in which photographers, painters, sculptors and artists in other media express their concepts of Nashville; and Nashville Street Furniture II, a competition among Nashville architects to design the 1990 festival gateway.

Admission to designated secured areas of this year's festival will cost \$2 for adults with children under age 12 admitted free if accompanied by an adult. The secured area will include the Legislative Plaza and Courthouse Square and all of the Deadrick Street entertainment and exhibit areas between.

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SHERRE DRYDEN  
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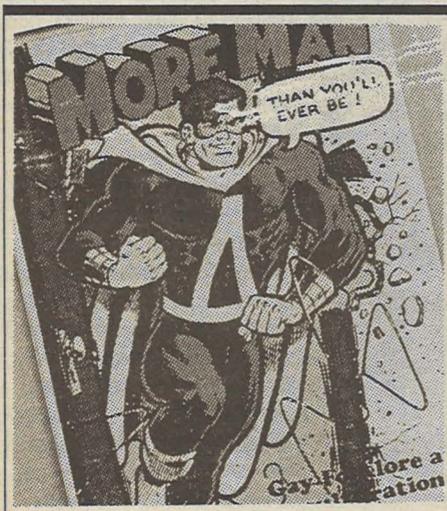
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• 4825 Trousdale (at Blackman), Nashville

# Daye Pages

QUARTERLY BOOK SECTION

SUMMER, 1989



## More Man Than You'll Ever Be

*More Man Than You'll Ever Be: Gay Folklore and Acculturation in Middle America.* Joseph P. Goodwin. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. 122 pp. \$29.95, \$9.95 paper.

Reviewed by **SHERRE DRYDEN**  
Book Editor

**MORE MAN THAN** *You'll Ever Be* is, undoubtedly, one of the most problematic books in the area of gay studies to be published in a while. Even the publisher admits (revels in?) the expected controversy by including in the publicity packet the statement "This may not be an easy book for everyone to read or understand."

There seems to be a fundamental confusion about the book's mission, particularly its intended audience. In some respects, *More Man* seems to be an academic book, meant to be read by folklore and gay studies scholars. It is published by a university press and was, in its original form, Joseph Goodwin's doctoral dissertation. It retains the notes, bibliography and some of the language characteristic of scholarly analysis.

At the same time, however, the book appears to assume (and be marketed to) quite a different audience. The bright cover features a magenta-suited super-hero bursting out of a closet, wire hangers flying. The jokes—Goodwin focuses on humor—are conveniently set in bold type. The text is quite chatty, relies little on theoretical concepts requiring more than a two paragraph explanation and includes several references to the author's (evidently widely known) affinity for jokes of any kind.

This is not to say that it is not possible to write a sound scholarly book that happens to be chatty. The problem with *More Man* is that I do not believe it is a sound scholarly book. If that is what it is meant to be, it fails. If it is meant to be sort of a joke book with excuses, or even a popular look at gay male folklore, it is offensive.

*More Man* fails as a scholarly study for many reasons, but primarily because it lacks a theo-

## Book previews: A look at coming attractions

compiled by **SHERRE DRYDEN**  
Book Editor

• *Alyson Almanac: A Treasury of Information for the Gay and Lesbian Community.* Alyson Publications. \$6.95.

Sections include "Highlights of Our History," "Penpals for Gay Teenagers," "A Dictionary of Gay Slang and Historical Terms" and "Congressional Report Card."

• *The Bar Stories: A Novel After All.* Nisa Donnelly. St. Martin's. \$16.95.

On a nondescript street in Oakland, California sits Babe's bar, a legendary place where women who love women come to celebrate, to dry their tears, to spin dreams and, every once in a while, to have their fantasies come true. These tales of individual women are woven together into a novel. "We're respectable," Babe Daniels says, "because we survived...and we survived because we knew how to kick ass."

• *Bennett's Angel.* Barton A. Midwood. British American/Paris Review Books. \$18.95, June.

When David Bennett, a graduate student at an upstate New York college awakes one morning in 1959, he discovers that he has partial amnesia. While concealing his memory loss from his friends, David tries to answer the questions of what happened the night before. The possibility that he shared a homoerotic episode with the mysterious Dmitri Leskov is supported by his relationship with Jimmy Fisher, a fellow student who has just left his wife for a boyfriend.

• *The Best Man.* Paul Reidinger. Alyson Publications. \$7.95.

retical base that would permit an analysis of Goodwin's findings by other folklorists (unless I am wildly overestimating a discipline of which I admittedly know little) or gay studies scholars. In fact, Goodwin provides almost no analysis, instead reporting, making broad generalizations and giving simplistic explanations based on a limited (and dated) survey and (primarily) personal knowledge. Being gay, for Goodwin—he proudly refers to himself as an "insider" at least twice—confers a degree of expertise that makes further study unnecessary.

For example, personal space, an integral part of the verbal and nonverbal communication he lists as one of the four major types of gay folklore, is dealt with superficially. Gays (men, presumably), Goodwin says, allow a great deal more physical contact than heterosexuals (men?). Assuming that we accept his assertion, for which he cites no evidence, what does this fact mean?

**SOME FEMINIST SCHOLARS** who look at proxemics (the study of touching and personal space) posit that power plays an important role in whom we touch and who touches us. Women, seen as unpowerful and oppressed, are touched, particularly by men, much more often than men are touched. Touching, then,

David and Katherine have been best friends since college. They're both looking for one man they can spend the rest of their lives with. But, their individual searches lead them both to the same man—and a threesome is not what they had in mind.

• *Books and Life.* Jan Clausen. Ohio State University. \$24.95, \$8.95 paper.

A collection of essays and reviews dealing with feminism, lesbianism and activism—and the relations between these three and a host of other -isms. Clausen calls seventies feminism a "womb/crucible," and says that she enjoys fiction by men partly because it provides a "vacation...from ideology." She also describes her difficulties as a "flommy"—stepmother to her female lover's daughter.

• *The Buccaneer.* M.S. Hunter. Alyson Publications. \$8.95.

The tale of Tommy the Cutlass, a seventeenth-century buccaneer who ails the Caribbean. Tommy's exploits have the swashbuckling action of an Errol Flynn movie, but with a difference. M.S. Hunter's all-male buccaneer community (which includes a significant number of black pirates) are more interested in one another than in fair maidens.

• *Changing Pitches.* Steve Kluger. Alyson Publications. \$7.95

Washington Senators star Scotty MacKay is a left-handed pitcher whose fastball isn't what it used to be. His team is in last place. His girlfriend just got an acting job as a pitcher of Kool-Aid. And he's just been teamed with

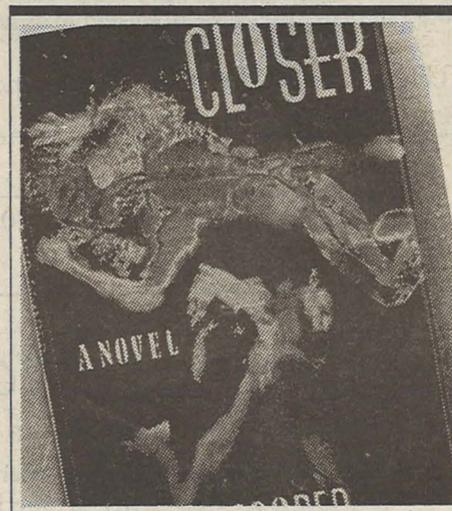
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becomes an activity available to the powerful. Carried further, the act of having one's touch tolerated empowers; being touched disempowers. If gay men touch and are touched more often (or differently) than heterosexual men, what does it mean? How is power implicated and to what degree is being touchable related to the equation of effeminacy (femininity) and homosexuality?

Goodwin, who could have legitimately avoided the subject of proxemics altogether, instead tosses off a simplistic explanation for which he provides no foundation: "Western tradition requires us to maintain a certain distance from one another...in gay bars (and social situations as well) these barriers are removed and closeness is encouraged...The gay bar makes the statement, 'This place is ours; we can be ourselves; we can openly touch and express affection for one another; we can openly seek sexual partners'."

Additionally: "One also notices among gay men an abandonment of personal space...No one is normally allowed within this area, but among gay people there is a lot of physical contact...This violation of personal space...is a response to the isolation homosexual people feel in heterosexual society. Everyone needs

• continued on page 8



## Closer

*Closer.* Dennis Cooper. New York: Grove Press, 1989. \$15.95.

Reviewed by **JOE MAROHL**  
Staff Writer

**PRETTY BOYS** make graves.

The pretty boy in Dennis Cooper's new novel *Closer* is George Miles. George is a Southern California high school beauty, with wealthy parents, and a taste for LSD and Disneyland, where his favorite attraction is the Haunted Mansion. "Dead men tell no tales." So goes the patter that accompanies one's ride through the animatronic mansion.

My initial impression of *Closer* was not favorable. But that changed. I read the book while at the beach, a place usually full of distractions for me. By the time I reached the third chapter, I was hooked and the book was finished before I left the beach a little less than four hours later.

*Closer* is similar in tone to the book (not, however, the movie) *Less Than Zero* and the movie *River's Edge*, both of which were coldly objective and dispassionate depictions of teenage death freaks. *Closer* goes beyond either of these. And except possibly for a final chapter that half-heartedly aims to be upbeat, the novel gives an uncompromised picture of Teenage Hell as part pornography, part slasher film.

I loved the book.

**IT DOES NOT SURPRISE ME** to learn that Dennis Cooper co-authored a porno screenplay. *Closer's* structure parodies hardcore video. Each chapter is a self-contained episode or story, involving a variety of characters, most of whom are just seventeen, who get to fuck George in a variety of positions with a variety of sex toys. The boys display a shocking interest in scat and necrophilia, which here stand for unimpassioned sex. Cooper treats all of this without editorializing, moralizing or flinching.

The major characters are no more differentiated than the participants in porn films, but then the power of this book is its insouciant

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"I still remember that autumn day when Lexie and I became friends..."

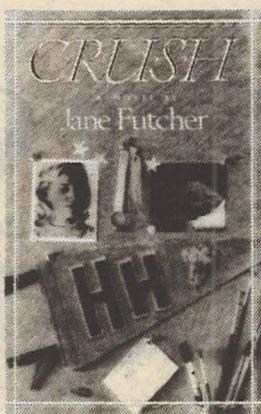
## C·R·U·S·H

a novel by Jane Fitcher

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—Carol Seajay, in *Feminist Bookstore News*

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## A Mistress Moderately Fair

by Katherine Sturtevant

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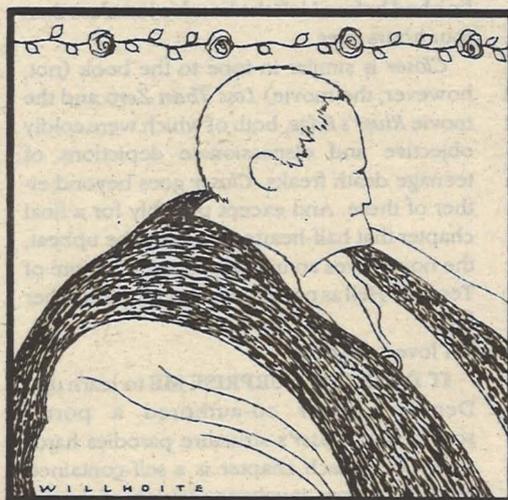
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## Out of All Time

by Terry Boughner

Gertrude Stein is just one of the many fascinating people you'll find in this history of gays and lesbians from ancient Egypt to the present. Fifty vignettes of both well-known and lesser-known historical figures are handsomely illustrated by caricaturist Michael Willhoite.

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### • continued from page 5

a catcher he detests: Jason Cornell.

• *Clicking Stones*. Nancy Tyler Glenn. Naiad Press. \$8.95.

Seven-year old Erica stumbles into a mystical place where a mysterious woman gives her a Clicking Stone. Striking the stone against any other stone causes both to flare into an incredible brilliance not visible to everyone. When Morgan moves in next door, the girls grow up together and one day the two click the stones.

• *Flame Forest*. Michael Upchurch. Available Books. \$5.95.

Sixteen year old Jim Ward befriends Peter and Roberta Lindquist, an American sister and brother who have recently moved to Jim's town. All three are lonely and isolated. Jim helps his mother care for her second husband, who is incapacitated by Alzheimer's disease. Peter, who is gay, becomes involved with drugs. Roberta remains aloof and withdrawn. Upchurch contrasts Jim and his mother, who accept and share their responsibility, with the Lindquists, whose violence and insanity are barely repressed.

• *Gay Relationships: How to Find Them, Form Them and How to Make Them Last*. Tina Tessina. Jeremy P. Tarcher. \$17.95. June.

• *Great Fire of London*. Peter Ackroyd. University of Chicago Press. \$9.95.

Director Spenser Spender hopes to capture the chaotic spirit of modern London in a new film based on Charles Dickens' novel *Little Dorrit*. As the filming advances it draws together strangers possessed by similar purposes: a dangerous midget, a gay Dickens scholar and a young woman who believes herself to be Little Dorrit. Originally published in 1982.

• *Green Bananas*. Michael Drinkard. Alfred A. Knopf. \$17.95.

A love story about Sylvan, a Santa Cruz college senior majoring in earth sciences, and Phyllis, a lesbian who runs the day care center where he works. Phyllis wants a baby by artificial insemination; Sylvan wants sex.

• *Healing Heart: Poems 1973-1988*. Gloria T. Hull. Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. \$8.95.

Gloria Hull (*But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*) is one of the foremost scholars in the field of black women's studies. In these poems she explores relationships with family, friends and lovers, and the process of healing from emotional and sexual abuse. Gwendolyn Brooks describes Hull's poetry: "Here we have dash and smash, range, a variety of musics, exciting virtuosity. Here we have intelligent decisions, and plain, raw truth."

• *How to Be a Lesbian with Class: How to Put-Off-Shut-Up Most of the People All of the Time*. Alice H. Potter. Ashley Books. \$6.95

• *Always a Sister: The Feminism of Lillian D. Wald*. Doris Groshen Daniels. Feminist Press. \$24.95, June.

Lillian Wald was a nurse, social reformer and founder of the Henry Street Settlement on New York's Lower East Side. Daniels tracks Wald's participation in numerous issues and attempts to interpret her achievements within the context of first-wave feminism, denying claims that Wald was a lesbian.

• *Joy Ride*. Barbara Howell. Viking. \$17.95.

Midwesterner Madeleine Gibbons, a conventional housewife and mother of two is transplanted to New York City, a city of manipulators and predators. Her friend (and

# PREVIEW

New books on

betrayal) is Joy Castleman, once a bestselling feminist novelist, now obsessed with fantasies of male domination fed by her sexual experiences with male and female lovers. Madeleine, the narrator, both idolizes and scorns Joy, but eventually comes around to her point of view — that all women end up as servants to men.

• *Lone Stars*. Sophia Healy. Atlantic Monthly. \$16.95.

Young Mexican artist Lupe lives with her husband Stas in Texas on the bank of a small river, near Lupe's family. Stas is also an artist, a Polish emigré 20 years her senior. *Lone Stars*, Healy's first novel, explores the thoughts each has about the other as Lupe prepares for a show and then has an affair with the gallery owner, a Polish woman who is Stas's former lover.

• *Manhood and the American Renaissance*. David Leverenz. Cornell University Press. \$32.50.

Another in the group recent books taking a revisionist look at manhood and masculinity, Leverenz uses psychoanalytic theory to dispute the traditional interpretation of the 19th century American man as a rugged, competitive individualist. Specifically, Leverenz examines

Whitman and Hawthorne, speculating that Hawthorne was the victim of sexual abuse by the uncle with whom he shared a bed.

• *Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein*. Eric A. Gordon. St. Martin's. \$27.95.

Blitzstein, a composer best known for his American stage adaptation of Bertold Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*, also composed a considerable body of original work, most with a strong strain of social commentary. For example, his operas of the 1930s reflect his commitment to the labor movement and left-wing causes. Gordon gives lengthy synopses of the plots of Blitzstein's work as well as a complete account of the composer's life.

• *My Father's Moon*. Elizabeth Jolley. Harper & Row. \$15.95.

Set against World War II and the London Blitz, *My Father's Moon* is the story of Vera Wright, whose lower-class parents scrimped to send her to boarding school and nursing college. In school, Vera feels closed out of the circle of privileged girls, self-conscious about her clothes, accent and lack of breeding. At college she finds some fulfillment in a relationship with another trainee. Later, however, she is exploited and betrayed by a staff doctor and his wife. Finally, she and her baby daughter face a life of "sorrow and futility." *Publisher's Weekly* says, "Jolley's power to convey the anguish of sensitive, lonely people creates a haunting narrative."

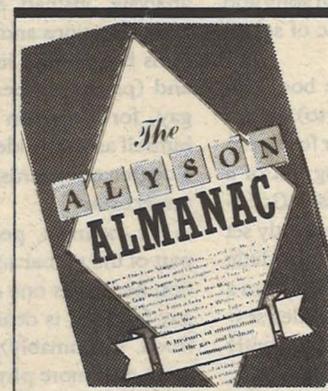
• *Nonsexist Word Finder: A Dictionary of Gender-Free Usage*. Rosalie Maggio. Beacon Press. \$9.95

Originally published in 1987; this is the first edition to be available in bookstores. An accessible, easy-to-use guide that gives alternatives, explanations or definitions for over

5,000 words and phrases. Appendices list general guidelines and include essays on the rationale and practice of nonsexist writing.

• *The Novice*. Timothy Ireland. Gay Men's Press. \$7.95.

Donovan Crowther is 23 and still a virgin. Romantic



# IEWS

on the way

and uncertain, he is drawn to London in his search for love. From the moment he arrives, it's clear that whatever happens, his life will never be the same again.

• *Of Love and Glory*. Evelyn Kennedy. Naiad Press. \$8.95.

It is 1943 in blitz-torn England. Lieutenant Jennifer Kincaide is on her first assignment as a U.S. Army nurse, newly married to a man she isn't sure she loves. Then she meets journalist-adventurer Maggie Conover in a London bomb shelter. Irresistibly drawn to one another, the two women become caught in the war and in love.

• *Panthers in the Skins of Men*. Charles Nelson. Meadowland. \$9.95.

In this sequel to *The Boy Who Picked the Bullets Up*, Nelson again recounts the adventures and misadventures of Kurt Strom. Back from Vietnam, Kurt teams up with Nick, a brawny Italian state trooper who is very married but very intrigued with Kurt.

• *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*. Edited by Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, with Robert A. Padgug. Temple University Press. \$34.95, \$16.95 paper. June.

• *Passion and Power* brings together some of the most recent and innovative writing on the history of sexuality and explores the experiences, ideas and conflicts that have shaped the emergence of modern sexual identities. Arguing that sexuality is not an unchanging biological reality or a universal natural force, the editors include essays such as Jeffrey Weeks' "Movements or Affirmation: Sexual Meanings and Homosexual Identities," "The Reproduction of Butch-Fem Roles: A Social Constructionist Approach" by Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline Davis and Robert A. Padgug's "Gay Villain, Gay Hero: Homosexuality and the Social Construction of AIDS."

• *A Place at the Table*. Edith Konecky. Random House. \$16.95.

Rachel Levin is a divorced novelist who lives in Manhattan. She has a small circle of intimate friends and a lover, a young woman lawyer. The novel chronicles Rachel's life — she begins a new novel, visits one of her sons on the birth of his first child, suffers when her friend Margo is left by her husband, breaks up with her lover, undergoes a mastectomy.

• *Poets For Life: 74 Poets Respond to AIDS*. Crown. \$18.95. June.

Includes works by Adrienne Rich, Robert Creeley, Allen Ginsberg and June Jordan.

• *Puppies*. John Valentine. Gay Men's Press. \$9.50

It is 1970 and John Valentine writes for an underground paper in Hollywood. A decaying cardboard building houses both the paper and John: "Peeling wallpaper. Broken windows. Unlockable locks. Bad plumbing. Most slumlike quarters I've ever had...The building was the street-kids social and community center. Anyone looking for a crashpad looked first there...It was a sexual paradise."

• *Sex and Other Sacred Games*. Kim Chernin and Renate Stendhal. Times Books. \$17.95, June.

Written in alternating chapters by Chernin (*The Hungry Self*) and Stendhal, a German journalist, this discourse on female sexuality tells the story of two women — one American and heterosexual, the other

European and lesbian — who meet in a Paris cafe.

• *Shouting at the Lord: Stephen Gordon, A Lesbian's Heroine?* Rebecca O'Rourke. NY: Routledge. \$10.95 paper. June.

• *Sister Gin*. June Arnold. Feminist Press. \$8.95. June.

• *Surviving Sisters*. Gail Pass. Naiad Press. \$8.95.

Irena Lampros becomes research assistant to archaeologist Maggie Leland. The formidable, seemingly self-contained Leland is assembling artifacts traceable to an ancient earth goddess. When Irena confronts her passion for this intimidating woman, an emotional war breaks out.

• *Summer People*. Marge Piercy. Summit. \$19.95. June.

For ten years Susan, a fabric designer, and her sculptor husband Willie have maintained a happy marriage while each has also been the lover of flutist/composer Dinah. The three have adjoining houses on Cape Cod and are visited by a series of "summer people" — a Boston doctor and his seductive wife, Willie's son, and a celebrated flutist who woos Dinah.

• *T.E. Lawrence: The Selected Letters*. Selected and edited by Malcolm Brown. Norton. \$27.50.

Unlike earlier collections of Lawrence's letters, this edition is unexpurgated, containing many letters previously unavailable, addressing correspondents such as E.M. Forster and Noël Coward. Also included is much previously unpublished material about Lawrence during World War I, about his sexuality and about his state of mind in the last weeks of his life.

• *Time's Power: Poems 1985-1988*. Adrienne Rich. Norton. \$15.95, \$7.95 paper.

• *To Boys Unknown*. E.E. Bradford. Gay Men's Press. \$7.95.

Part of GMP's Gay Verse series. The Rev. Edwin Emmanuel Bradford was part of a movement of gay poets from the 1890s to the 1930s who called themselves the Uranians. His poems were popular, and not just among gay followers. Bradford's admirers included John Betjeman and W.H. Auden.

• *A Turn of the Wheel*. Oliver Friggieri. Translated by Grazio Falzon. Wilfion Books. \$12.95.

*A Turn of the Wheel* tells the story of Baruch Sammut, a young university student, whose idealistic pursuit of desire — in an obsession with a philosophy professor, an affair with a young seminarian and a frustrating liaison with a prostitute — eventually leads him to attempt suicide. His attempt fails and he awakens to the realization that even this act of desperation was just another ironic twist of his fate.

• *Walking After Midnight*. Richard Nusser. Villard. \$16.95. June.

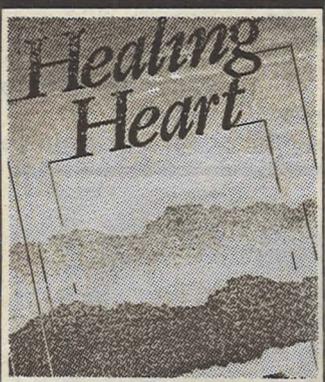
This first mystery novel by a New York reporter features Max Darenow. When Denise Overton is murdered, Max suspects her work on a book about Latino transvestites

somehow involved her in a drug war. Denise's friend, a female impersonator named Dixie Cupps, helps Max search for jet set drag performer Esmeralda, whose twin brother was killed at the same time as Denise.

• *Waterboys*. Eric Gabriel. Mercury. \$18.95. June.

• *Yukio Mishima*. Peter Wolfe. Crossroad/Continuum. \$18.95.

**Note: Name of publisher and month of publication are listed where available, along with hardcover price, except where noted.**



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## ... "More Man" reviewed

• continued from page 5

acceptance and close friends; one way the gay subculture meets this need is by eliminating the barriers normally associated with personal space."

Goodwin, evidently unwittingly, places this shrinking of personal space in the context of power by describing it with words like "abandonment" and "violation," but he is oblivious to anything possibly more complex than his own analysis.

It is a shame that *More Man* is not more challenging. Its offensiveness — and here I'm opening myself to charges of prudery or not "understanding" folklore studies — is inexcusable. For no discernable reason, no legitimate one at any rate, Goodwin reproduces some of the most disgusting sexist, racist and homophobic jokes known.

AT LEAST 29 of the 92 pages of text are taken up with over 100 jokes (not counting legends and amusing stories) about oral and anal sex, drag queens, AIDS, lesbians, women, ethnic groups and Tallulah Bankhead. Humor is one of Goodwin's four major types of gay folklore and, for him, humor equals jokes.

Although the jokes take up a disproportionate part of the text (he even quotes one partially in the original German), Goodwin provides little background on the theory of humor and does almost nothing in the way of analysis. Explications like "This joke draws its humor from a number of stereotypes: the Italian's fondness of pasta, the Jew's thriftiness (or even miserliness), and the Greek's predilection for anal intercourse" are most common though he does make occasional forays into more in-depth analysis: "Beneath the implied stupidity of one of the men lies another implication: 'We will fight oppression and seek our freedom at all costs.'"

If this "analysis" is weak, it becomes even weaker in Goodwin's most offensive chapter, "Better Blatant than Latent: Conflict and the Gay Subculture." In the space of six pages Goodwin lists 25 (one quarter the total) extremely anti-woman and/or anti-lesbian jokes with the justification that: "gay men are men and as such enjoy privileges traditionally allowed men in most cultures. Many of the jokes told in our society, including a large number of those told by gays, are misogynistic. In these

jokes (told by gay and straight men alike) we see a set of shared attitudes: women are seen as ignorant, useless (except for sex), and incomplete without a man."

It hardly seems necessary to comment. Perhaps within the context of a complex discussion of the relationship among male homosexuality, homophobia and misogyny it would be acceptable to use the examples Goodwin does. But the passage I have quoted is, basically, his entire discussion. He supplements it only with joke explications like "These two jokes imply that women need penises" and the theory, stated by the former Miss Gay Ohio Valley, U.S.A., that "women pose a threat." He does not even offer a defense for his sudden decision to veer away from the topic of gay male folklore; "gay men are men."

That brings us to my final question. Who is Goodwin talking about? Even though he says in the Introduction "I believe it is appropriate to use the terms gay and homosexual in the way that they are used by most gay people" it is often unclear just who Goodwin has in mind when he refers to "gay people."

"Gay" sometimes refers to women and men: "Although the gay subculture by no means includes all homosexual men and women, it does embrace a large number of them." Sometimes, though, it means only men: "Drawing upon this ability, gays take note of many cues emitted by other men..."

To add to the confusion, he also uses "lesbian" (there is some indication that "gay women" are different from "lesbians"): "In this study I have limited my comments to the folklore of gay men. There are several reasons for excluding lesbian material from consideration."

*More Man* will not, I suppose, actually do any great harm. But I fear that its primary use will be to provide some ignorant, immature men — gay ones, I guess, because the book will be shelved with other "gay" books and ignorant, immature heterosexuals wouldn't be caught there — with a source for some new offensive jokes.

IN THIS WAY, and by being one of the few (purportedly) academic studies of gay male folklore, it will perpetuate and legitimate the idea that women are objects, a little like six-packs, a little like slugs. •

## ... "Closer" reviewed

• continued from page 5

worries that his classmates envy his superstardom. tone, and not its *dramatis personae*, none of whom are, of themselves, interesting. The result is metapornography. Terrifying and exhilarating. If they ever make a movie of this book (doubtful, that), I expect Matt Sterling and David Cronenberg would have to co-direct it.

IN FACT, there are some elements in the book which invite cinematic treatment. A boy fails to notice his mother's death, which happens right in front of his eyes, because he is strung out on acid. Later, when his father asks him how his mother is doing, the boy answers simply, "Dead."

Another boy thinks he's George Michael and

An overweight pedophile procaines his

boyfriends' asses so he can pretend he's screwing them after they're dead. Stuff like that.

There's probably going to be some talk about this novel. People are going to call it irresponsible in its depiction of unsafe sex ("unsafe," in this context, is an understatement). People are going to accuse it of being homophobic. People are going to say that it promotes hallucinogenic drugs and suicide for young

people. But almost no one's going to put this baby down after the first fifty pages. •



Dennis Cooper, author of *Closer*. — PHOTO BY MICHEL DELSOL

## ...a promise to keep

• continued from page 10

lot of advice, but by offering their support and declaring their trust in me, they helped to put the story in perspective.

If I was to do a credible job in reporting on Promise, I would have to be fair and just. I was not there to take names and ruin people's lives. I was not there to pass judgment on the program's validity. I was not there to cast guilt on those people who administer the program.

Rather, I was there to learn about the workings of change therapy and to learn about the ideologies of the people who promote it. My assignment, as I saw it, was to present my findings in such a way that my readers could make their own judgments.

That's what journalism — ethical journalism — is all about.

The reactions to my three-week long series have been interesting. On one hand, I have been criticized for being too even-handed in my approach. One person even said he was uncertain if I was for change therapy or against it.

On the other hand, I have been criticized for

being grossly unfair to the men of Promise: "I just hope none of the men in that program try to kill themselves when they read your story," someone charged.

But a third person told me she was glad I had done the story because, she said, it was a story worth telling. "It's time people are made to think about it," she said. "You should be proud of the even-handed way you handled it."

Obviously, I preferred the last comment, because I am proud of the story. But not because of the reasons you may think: increased circulation, more people talking about the paper, the idea that the story could lead to a better-paying job with a bigger newspaper.

Instead, I am proud of the story because of the diverse opinions expressed by people as a result of reading it. The most any reporter can hope for is writing something that will make people think. If they agree, that's great. If they disagree, that's wonderful. You see, if I can make one person think about something, if I can challenge the conventional wisdom, then I've succeeded.

And that's a promise. •

## Theatres to open new shows

by JEFF ELLIS  
Managing Editor

**MID-SOUTH** theatergoers will enjoy a wide variety of productions this summer: burlesque, drama, musicals and vintage comedy.

Tennessee Repertory Theatre (TRT), TPAC's resident professional theater company, will launch its new, more intimate Second Stage theatre Thursday, June 8, in the performance space at West End United Methodist Church. TRT's Second Stage productions will offer Nashville audiences an off-off Broadway-type theatrical experience in the space, which seats only 100 people.

Marsha Norman's *'Night Mother*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning story of a woman who hold her mother physically and emotionally hostage one evening as she contemplates suicide, opens on June 8 and plays for eight performances through June 18.

*Blood Knot*, South African playwright Athol Fugard's two-character play set in a squalid section of Johannesburg, examines the lives of two black brothers — one dark-skinned and one light-skinned. It will be staged June 22 through July 2.

"Our new Second Stage offerings will expand both our creative and performance capabilities and is the next step in the continued development of a sophisticated regional theater company based in Nashville," said TRT artistic director Mac Pirkle. "The program will allow us to stage plays on a smaller scale, while at the same time, we can consider a wider variety of contemporary plays, classical plays and original pieces without the economic and artistic constraints which accompany our larger productions at TPAC."

Tickets for both *'Night Mother* and *Blood Knot* are now on sale at all CentraTik locations, Sound Shop Record stores and Tower Records and Books. All tickets are \$10 and seating is general admission. Tickets can also be obtained by calling (615) 320-7172.

**MEMPHIS' PROFESSIONAL** theatre troupe, Playhouse on the Square, will premiere its production of *Sugar Babies* on Friday, June 9. Set to run through July 23, the show brings back the time when chorus girls and comics ruled the stage, when audiences were treated to a sensory smorgasbord of

spectacular dance numbers, hilarious satiric sketches, rapid-fire one-liners, novelty acts, gags, gimmicks and the inevitable schtick.

*Sugar Babies* features such Jimmy McHugh songs as "I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby," "Don't Blame Me" and "The When You and I Were Young Maggie Blues." The show is also spiced with songs created for it by Arthur Malvin, Jay Livingston and Ray Evans.

Gene Katz and Julie Ann DiPietro headline the cast, with Rebecca Klingler, Peter Colburn, Kelly Clinton, Jeff Huffman, Gabrielle Mason, Kerri Rivers, Kim Sanders and Colleen Sudduth.

Tickets are \$14 for Friday and Saturday night performances and \$12 for Thursday and Sunday. Reservations may be made by calling the Playhouse on the Square/Circuit Playhouse box office at (901) 726-4656.

**NASHVILLE'S** Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC) will present the world premiere of a new musical written by Nashville playwright/composer Jan Scarbrough. *A Rock Wedding* will be produced by TPAC, sponsored by AT&T, and will run August 18-27.

Mark Medoff, author of *Children of a Lesser God*, will act as artistic consultant for the production and has been involved with the play's development for several years.

The summer production of *A Rock Wedding* is the first time that TPAC has served as both producer and presenter of an original work.

"We believe that TPAC and all arts organizations should encourage artistic growth and development," says TPAC's Managing Director Warren Sumners. "It is out here in the heart of the country that many of our Broadway classics are born. Shows don't just open on Broadway any more. They're given readings and developmental production first. Because of this, we felt that producing *A Rock Wedding* was right for TPAC and Nashville."

**OTHER UPCOMING SHOWS** in the Nashville area include the Circle Players' production of the Rogers and Hammerstein musical *The King and I*, to be presented at St. Cecilia Academy next month.

Lakewood Community Theatre, located on Old Hickory Boulevard in Lakewood (near the Hermitage Golf Course) will premiere Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday* on Friday, July 7. •



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But you would still be friends?

**Rob:** Yes.

Would you invite him to dinner?

**Rob:** Yes.

Would you hug him?

**Rob:** Yes. Look, my best friends are my family. And if one of us got sick, we'd all be there for support.

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Answering service 24 hours call (901) 762-8401

# VIEWS

## Celebrate Pride

**THIS YEAR** marks the twentieth anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. It is a time to celebrate our accomplishments, to reflect on our defeats, a time to renewed commitment.

One of the most important things we can do is to support the efforts of those organizing Pride Week celebrations. Phone (901) 324-4297 in Memphis, or (615) 297-4293 in Nashville. And get involved. •

# BOX 40422

## Angry with station

Dear *Dare*,

Too often, it is all too easy to sit back and do nothing when something is wrong; do nothing and nothing gets done! I have seen this happen so very often in the gay community and was once one who was less motivated.

I was really incensed after reading the article that appeared in last week's "Waves" regarding the homophobic broadcasts of WKDF-FM 103.3's parody of the Angels' song "My Boyfriend's Back." I was so pissed off that I acted on my feelings and wrote a letter to their program director. My intentions are also to send a copy of my letter and a letter of complaint to each level in the hierarchy of the FCC [Federal Communications Commission].

WKDF is bound by the FCC's licensing requirements, in which community service is a major factor in renewal of their license. Any time a radio station is derelict in its duties to the community, it is the responsibility of those in the community to advise the FCC of this.

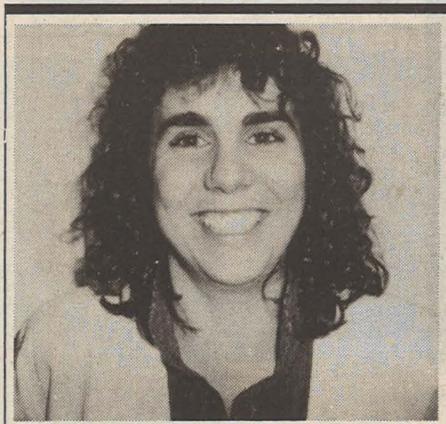
If you have any of the addresses for these FCC offices, I would greatly appreciate your giving them to me.

Thank you for your continued support of the local gay community and the encouragement to fight homophobia in all quarters.

**ALAN HERBERS**  
Nashville

**Editor's note: The Federal Communications Commission receives citizen complaints at the following address:**

**Dennis R. Patrick, Chair**  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20554



*Dare* thanks and wishes good luck to **Ann Taylor**, former advertising sales manager. Taylor is coordinating the display in Nashville of the NAMES Project National AIDS Quilt later this month. — DARE STAFF PHOTO

# Dare

TENNESSEE'S GAY AND LESBIAN NEWSWEEKLY

"I am the Love that dare not speak its name."  
— Lord Alfred Douglas, "The Two Loves," 1892

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We welcome your letters. Submissions over 500 words will be considered for publication in the *Soapbox* space. Letters must be signed and include the writer's address and phone for verification. Names will be withheld on request. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. No defamatory material will be published. All letters become the sole property of Pyramid Light & Power and will be assumed intended for publication unless otherwise explicitly stated.

**ARCHIVES**  
*Dare* is available on microfilm at the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

# BETWEEN THE LINES

## Promises to Keep

by **JEFF ELLIS**  
Managing Editor

**EARLY LAST YEAR**, when *Dare* was but a dream, a list of possible story ideas was assembled.

Included on that list was the topic of sexual orientation change therapy, long a point of contention for lesbian and gay activists. We knew then, as we now know, that it was a subject worth investigating, partly to satisfy our own curiosity but also to enlighten our readers. And so the story became a member of our "hot list" — a list of controversial and/or important subjects for coverage.

Once on the list, however, we were faced with many questions about change therapy: Who will cover the story? How extensive will the coverage be? Will we attempt to go "undercover" to get the real story?

It was a topic we discussed at length throughout our first year of publication. We examined our options and decided to wait for a while before tackling the issue.

At first we hoped to find someone to cover the story who was not very well known in the local lesbian and gay community. Unfortunately, the handful of people who are active in community affairs made finding a new face a nearly impossible task. Eventually, we gave up the search.

Finally, last November, I asked a very close friend — a heterosexual man — to help out with the investigation. A graduate of a church-supported college, he was aware of the attitudes toward homosexuality among fundamentalist Christian groups.

And, on several occasions, he had heard Mike Malloy, the executive director of Christian Counseling Services (CCS), speak on the subject of homosexuality.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE HE would have anything to do with change therapy," my friend said. "He's always speaking out for tolerance."

Together, the two of us began to make contacts and to question the existence of sexual orientation change therapy in Nashville. For a long time we were told that no such group existed. After about six weeks of investigation, we decided we had exhausted all our leads.

Then, in January, I decided to retrace some of our footsteps. I called CCS and, under an assumed identity, made an appointment with Malloy to discuss change therapy. He told me then that Promise existed to help people like me to had a sincere wish to change their sexual preferences from homosexual to heterosexual.

By making that appointment we were finally able to gain some tangible proof that such a program did indeed exist.

But what if someone recognized me?

In order to guard against that, I tried to change my appearance: Jeff had blond hair

and wore glasses. Richard, my alter ego, had red hair and didn't wear glasses. Although I've often professed a "thing" for men with red hair, I discovered it just didn't look right on me. And not wearing glasses just meant I had a headache after my counseling sessions.

When the Promise group actually began to meet, I knew discovery of my true identity was more likely. I was nervous before that initial meeting and you can imagine my discomfort when one of the men in the group turned out to be someone I recognized from a political function I attended more than a year ago.

When a member of the group then confronted me, saying he knew me and asking why I was there, I realized my investigation was over. If I attended another meeting, he would have informed the group's members about my real identity.

To be honest, I was relieved that I wouldn't have to continue the charade of being Richard. But my relief was shortlived. I was then faced with writing about my experiences.

I had planned for the investigation to continue through September. My discovery altered those plans and I had to confront the ethical questions

which had remained in the back of my mind from the beginning.

My college journalism professors — one of whom had given me a reprimand for what he considered a violation of ethics during a term as editor of the school paper — probably never considered ethics my strong suit. And, quite frankly, I was never quite sure about it myself.

But, apparently, all those collegiate tirades directed at me about my lax ethical standards did some good.

Essentially, my undercover assignment, would mean that I would gain someone's trust and then betray that confidence by writing about what they told me. That bothered me greatly.

The topic of sexual orientation change therapy was intriguing, certainly, but was its coverage important enough to justify betraying someone's trust?

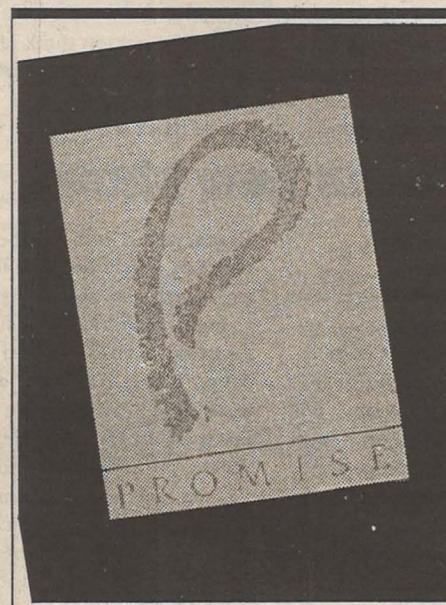
I SOUGHT ADVICE from two dear friends, both of whom I had known for well over ten years.

One, who lives amid the power and intrigue of Washington, urged me to pursue the story: "You'll be fine. You won't do anything to hurt anyone. I trust you," she said.

The other, who lives and works in Murfreesboro, admitted that her realm of expertise does not extend to undercover investigations. But, she counseled, "Be careful. Be fair. I trust you to do a thoughtful and accurate job."

Neither of them were quite prepared with a

• continued on page 9



## S C R E E N S

*Miss Firecracker*

reviewed by **JEFF ELLIS**  
Managing Editor

**Y'ALL HAVE** got to go see *Miss Firecracker*. You'll just love it!

*Miss Firecracker*, the new film comedy starring Holly Hunter and Mary Steenburgen, is yet another touchingly funny, slightly skewed look at the American family from Beth Henley.

Henley, who based the screenplay on her off-Broadway hit, looks at the South differently from most playwrights and screenwriters. Hers is a decidedly native perspective, while everyone else seems to look at us with a certain level of bemused condescension.

It's to be expected. Henley is, after all, from Jackson, Mississippi (and this friend of mine from high school — Grace Gooch — is married to her brother or cousin or somebody like that, so she's practically like family), so she knows what she's writing about. Her plays and films (including *Crimes of the Heart*) all seem imbued with a unerring honesty, a respect for her characters.

Henley's Southerners are never one-note caricatures, but are real human beings. Like Eudora Welty and Flannery O'Connor before her, Henley is not afraid to show her characters — warts and all — for the general public to see, examine and dissect.

Like Welty, Flannery and company, Henley's works are loyal to the recurring themes of Southern literature: family, honor, pride.

And when her characters are at their most despicable and questionable, Henley manages to put them in such a sweet little package that you wouldn't mind taking them home to meet your mama.

The heroine of *Miss Firecracker*, who aspires to winning the annual Yazoo City Fourth of July celebration, is Carnelle Scott, a 26-year-old orphan with a heart as big as the Pearl River and hair redder than Wanda Miller's.

Wanda Miller is my Mama's beautician. I refer to Wanda, you see, because the characters of *Miss Firecracker* are so real, so richly drawn, that you just can't help comparing them to people you've known since way back when from back home.

**WHEN WE FIRST MEET** Carnelle she's flushing the guts out of a Mississippi pond-raised catfish. Hoping to get out of catfish and go to Memphis and "become a model or somethin'," she dreams of being *Miss Firecracker*.

Her dream of winning the title goes back to when she was nine years old, when Carnelle (nursing a case of ringworm underneath a short wool yellow hat — "that from a distance Mama said looked like real short blonde hair") revels in the glory surrounding the coronation of her cousin Elain as Miss Firecracker 1972.

After years of saying she was going to enter, Carnelle is preparing, with a vengeance, for the pageant: "People don't call me Miss Hot Tamale anymore, I go to church on Sunday and I try to have an orphan over for dinner at least once a week."

She has died her hair a bright red to match the gown she plans to wear in the pageant — the same gown Elain wore in her triumphant march to the title.

And she's been working on her talent num-

ber — a super-patriotic, military toe tap to "The Star Spangled Banner" — for five years. Her costume is being created by a woman who started sewing at the age of four, making clothes for the bullfrogs that lived in her front yard.

Carnelle's talent isn't as offbeat as you might suspect. One contestant does an act with hula hoops, another plays the piano rather badly and a third does the famous Scarlett O'Hara "I'll never go hungry again" speech from *Gone With the Wind* (just like Carol Perkins, Miss McNairy County 1972, did in the Miss Tennessee pageant).

**AFTER THE FILM**, someone remarked, "That movie was right about one thing: about how serious people take those pageants down in Mississippi!"

My reply: "No, it wasn't. They take pageants much more seriously than that. Nobody I know in Mississippi would have worn such ugly evening gowns, thank you very much!"

Although in the hands of someone else, *Miss Firecracker* could be written off as just another movie about a bunch of dumb Southerners acting crazy, in Henley's able hands — and with a wonderful cast — it's pretty much on target. From the frenzy surrounding pageant prepara-

tions to the hot, sticky, sultry weather that is summer in Yazoo City, it paints an amazingly good likeness of Southern people.

There's Carnelle (played engagingly by the always delightful Holly Hunter, born in Georgia): the woman who refuses to let circumstances limit her ambitions.

Elain (Mary Steenburgen, a native Arkansan, in a role that is at once both sympathetic and unlikable): the fading beauty queen, grasping desperately at her past glory days in an effort to fend off time.

Popeye (the superb Alfre Woodard in one of her best roles to date; and a big old thank-you to whoever reteamed Steenburgen and Woodard, both of whom were so wonderful in *Cross Creek*): the woman struggling to free herself from the constraints that come with being a black woman in Mississippi.

Delmont (Tim Robbins, fresh from last summer's *Bull Durham*): Elain's brother and Carnelle's cousin, who's just out of a sanitarium and determined to exact his revenge on Elain and Yazoo City society.

These are people that you're likely to meet in any Mississippi town or any Tennessee town or any Southern town, for that matter.

And while *Miss Firecracker* is about a beauty pageant — and a lot of people really hate beauty pageants — it's about so much more than that.

It's about refusing to let life get you down whenever you know you're better than people say you are.

It's about having a dream and working for it despite the smell left on your hands from doing a job you hate.

It's about hanging onto memories — and about letting them go when you don't need them any more. •



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