

Dare

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 23

TENNESSEE'S GAY AND LESBIAN NEWSWEEKLY

JUNE 9-15, 1989

Print shop picketed

Protesters charge bias

by HARRISON HICKS
Staff Writer

Seven Metropolitan Community Church/Nashville members, saying they were concerned about anti-gay discrimination, took their message to the streets last week in a picket of the Big Red Q Quikprint shop on Nashville's Harding Place.

Franchise owner Bill Breyfogel was accused of firing layout artist Jim Aldredge for being gay. Aldredge, a member of the church, charged then that Breyfogel fired him because another employee stopped talking to Aldredge when he learned Aldredge was gay. Aldredge led the picketers Thursday, June 1.

Among the protesters was Paul Tucker, the church's pastor. Tucker said he saw the picket as a matter of justice. "I think it's very important for us to continue to confront issues that are justice issues and discrimination issues," said Tucker, who along with the other protesters carried signs denouncing Big Red Q. Aldredge's mother also joined the picket Thursday afternoon, saying that she supported her son's rights.

Besides picketing, the protesters also handed out leaflets explaining what they were doing and urged anyone considering doing business with the shop not to do so.

Aldredge, a senior in graphic arts at Middle Tennessee State University in nearby Murfreesboro, said earlier that he hoped the picket would "send a message the the lesbian and gay community would not support businesses that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation."

Besides attracting the attention of Big Red Q employees and customers, the protest was also noticed by those in neighboring stores. Despite the fact that the protesters had stayed

• continued on page 3

Benefit auction scheduled

by HARRISON HICKS
Staff Writer

Christopher Makos' photograph of Andy Warhol in drag, an original Howard Cruse "Wendel" cartoon and two autographed scores from composer Ned Rorem are among the more than 300 items scheduled to be sold at the Celebrities and Friends Auction. The event, a benefit for Metropolitan Community Church/Nashville (MCC) and AIDS Southern Kentucky (ASK), will kick off Nashville Pride Week festivities on June 17th with a general sale and preview slated to begin at 6:30 p.m., followed by the auction at 7:30 p.m.

All of the items to be sold were donated by individuals and organizations across the coun-



Hippies, Faeries and Trolls, documentary photography by Tennessean Lee Steenhuis, examines life in Nashville's Cumberland River community, the Flatrock hippy collective near Murfreesboro and the Radical Faeries' Short Mountain Sanctuary near Woodbury. The exhibition opens Sunday, June 11, with a reception from 1:00-3:00 p.m. at Mills Bookstore in Nashville's Hillsboro Village. — PHOTO BY LEE STEENHUIS

Federal-court gay porn defendants plead guilty

by JEFF ELLIS
Managing Editor

Three Chicago men, charged in federal indictments with engaging in a conspiracy to distribute obscene videotapes through the U.S. mails, last week pled guilty in Nashville federal court.

The trio, Steve Toughin, Randy Larsen and Sean O'Connor, were described by federal authorities as operators of the nation's largest pornography distribution network. Both government prosecutors and defense attorneys had called "experts" — mostly educators and sociologists — to the stand in an effort to make their case.

Both sides had completed their presentations and were preparing to give their closing arguments when the three defendants surprisingly entered guilty pleas.

Toughin, 42, pled guilty to two counts of violating federal obscenity statutes. He faces a maximum 10 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine. Under his plea bargain, no sentencing agreement was made.

Larsen, 40, and O'Connor, 42, both employees of Toughin's Chicago-based Bijou Video Sales, pled guilty only to conspiracy charges. They face maximum sentences of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Their plea bargain includes a government pledge not to oppose a sentence of probation.

Sentencing by U.S. District Judge John T. Nixon is set for August 7.

The three men agreed to rid their videocassette inventory of any films with sadomasochistic themes and to refrain from distributing videocassettes containing any sexually explicit acts in Tennessee or Utah.

Toughin, Larsen and O'Connor — along with film director David Rosen — were indicted by federal grand juries in Nashville and Salt Lake City, Utah last summer and an indictment is pending in Nebraska on similar charges. Under their agreement here, the Utah case will be transferred to Nashville and the defendants will enter guilty pleas to those

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Dare this week

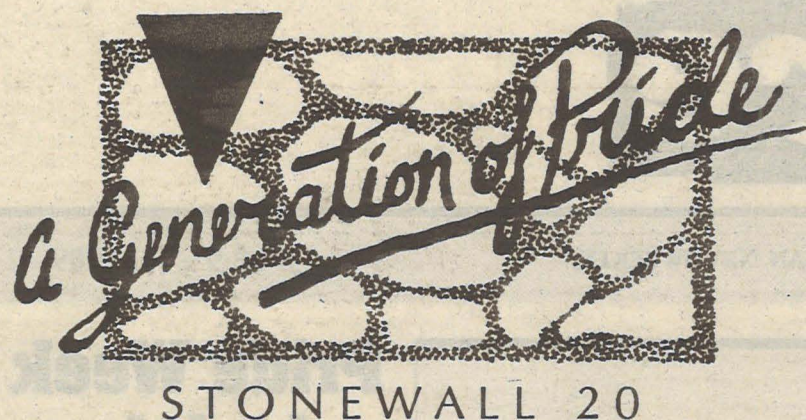
**Pictures of AIDS:
Epitaphs for the Living,**
page 4.



**How to stay together:
Permanent Partners,**
Pages, page 7.

**Not to mention alien boys.
Earth Girls Are Easy,
Screens, page 8.**





▼ 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.

MEMPHIS

Mondays

Gay Alternative Hour Radio show, WEVL-FM 90, 6-7pm.

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

Tuesdays

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

Wednesdays

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

Thursdays

P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Support group. St. John's Episcopal Church, 322 S Greer. 1st Thursday only. Info 901 761-1444.

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

Into the Light (Women's Alcoholics Anonymous) Meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 276-7379.

Fridays

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

Saturdays

Twisted Sisters (ACOA) Open meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. Noon. Info 901 276-7379.

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

Sundays

Agape New Life Church Sunday School, 9:30am. Worship service, 11am. Info 901 276-1872.

Holy Trinity Community Church Worship service, 11am. 1216 Forrest Ave. Info 901 726-9443.

Into the Light (Women's Alcoholics Anonymous) Meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. Noon. Info 901 276-7379.

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

NASHVILLE

Mondays

Gay Overeaters Anonymous Open meeting for lesbian and gay overeaters. MCC, 5:30pm. Info 615-327-4614.

Nashville CARES ARC/AIDS 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.

Al-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 615-862-0332.

MTSU Lambda Association Meeting for lesbian and gay Middle Tennessee State University students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Murfreesboro. 7pm. Info 615-890-3767.

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.

Gay Parents Support Group Meeting. MCC. 1st Wednesday only. 7pm. Info 615-831-2941 or 615-320-0288.

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.

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.

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

Special Events

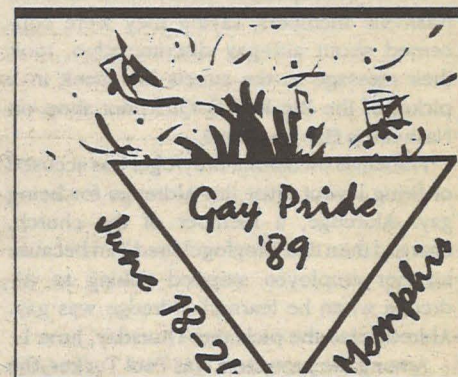
Sunday, June 11

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.

Concert Martie van der Voort, sponsored by Random Productions in celebration of Lesbian and Gay Pride Week. Reception follows. Laurel Theatre, 1538 Laurel Ave, Knoxville. \$8. Info 615-688-3428.



Martie van der Voort

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.

Sunday, June 25

Picnic Nashville Pride Week '89 picnic. Potluck, bring your own beverage. Edwin Warner Park site #10, Nashville. Free. Info 615-297-4293.

Benefit Benefit for Nashville AIDS service organizations. Pre-event *Circle of Friends* reception with Janis Ian, at Cakewalk Restaurant, 3001 West End Ave, Nashville. \$150 per person, \$250 per couple. Main event *For Pete's Sake!* Janis Ian sings at Slice of Life Restaurant, 1811 Division, Nashville. \$25 minimum donation. Info 615-269-7552.

...picket

• continued from page 1

in front of Big Red Q for their protest and had not approached customers of other stores, several other tenants of the complex called center management and police to complain about the protesters. Shortly after 10:00 a.m., managers threatened to have the picketers arrested for trespassing if they didn't leave, and accused them of interfering with other businesses in the complex. The protesters refused to leave, saying that they were exercising their Constitutional right to free speech.

A WKRN-TV (Channel 2 in Nashville) camera crew recorded the scene as police informed the complex managers that the protesters were within their legal rights as long as they stayed off the sidewalks in front of the shops and didn't interfere with traffic on the street.

despite a lower-than-expected turnout for the event, both Tucker and Aldredge said they felt the picket was successful in getting the group's message out to the public. "I thought

we had a lot of positive reinforcement from the people that we met," Aldredge, who noted that several of the customers he approached had told him that they would no longer do business with Big Red Q.

Aldredge was critical of WKRN's coverage of the picket, which aired that evening. "I wasn't real thrilled with the way the news media covered it," he said, calling the coverage slanted because it left out his statement that current laws do not protect lesbians and gay men from job discrimination, thereby diluting the picket's message. He also said that Breyfogel changed his story of why Aldredge was fired. Speaking on camera, Breyfogel said that Aldredge's work was not up to par and that Aldredge wanted to "party" all the time. In an earlier interview with Dare, Breyfogel denied that Aldredge's homosexuality had anything to do with his dismissal and said that he was fired because he was not available for full-time work. •

...Pride Week

• continued from page 1

Community Church (MCC), include a parade, rally, concert and picnic.

This year's parade, set for Saturday, June 24, will step off from Fannie Mae Dees Park at 24th and Blakemore at 3 p.m., Campbell said, two hours later than last year's parade.

"Among the things we took into account when planning Pride Week was a survey conducted by Krzysztof Krakowiak which asked people what they thought about the 1988 celebration," Campbell said. "Several people complained about the 1 p.m. heat and suggested a later starting time."

Another suggestion was a longer, more visible parade route, she noted. This year's parade will follow the same route as last year's, but marchers will circle the Parthenon in Centennial Park before heading to the festival site at the park's bandshell.

Renée McCoy, executive director of the National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays will be keynote speaker for the rally. Speakers representing the National Organization for Women, Nashville CARES and other organiza-

tions will also take part.

At 6 p.m., Olivia Records artist Deidre McCalla will be presented in concert. The concert, free and open to the public, will also take part at the bandshell.

The annual Pride Picnic, to be held at Edwin Warner Park Picnic Site 10, is set for Sunday, June 25 at 1 p.m.

Campbell said that this year's celebration is proving to be costlier than last year's events.

"Things are being handled differently by Metro Government this year. We have to hire more police officers to direct traffic, we will have to have police barricades and this year we had to take out insurance that we didn't have to last year," Campbell said.

As a result, the Pride Week committee finds itself financially strapped: "We've had a few benefits — at Warehouse 28, Juanita's and Sub and Pub — but our expenses are far greater than last year," she said.

But a tight budget hasn't dampened the committee's enthusiasm, Campbell said.

"I think this year the Committee is more confident." •

...porn trial

• continued from page 1

charges.

Sentences for both cases will run concurrently, according to the agreement announced in court last week.

During the weeklong trial, the 12 jurors and three alternates were required to view four films: *Please Sir, You Said a Mouthful*, *The Final Chapter of Mistress Ann* and *Erotic Hands*. Nixon and Chief U.S. District Judge Thomas A. Wiseman Jr. both complimented the jurors for their "courage" in viewing the films and expressed regret "that pornography exists."

The charges against the men resulted from a 1985 complaint filed by the late Richard Kemp,

of Nashville, who told postal inspectors he had received flyers from Tushin's mail-order business on at least two occasions.

Complaints filed some time later in Salt Lake City prompted postal inspectors there to contact local authorities who, in turn, ordered videotapes from the mail-order departments of Slave and Master Video Inc., and Entertainment and Amusement Inc.

Inspectors set up a post office box in Brentwood, in neighboring Williamson County, and ordered the videotapes. After receiving the tapes, inspectors traveled to Chicago and raided Tushin's Bijou Theatre. That action came after federal authorities cracked down on pornography operations in eight states. •

...auction

• continued from page 1

his labors on the project, he said. Isaacs has worked on the project since October of last year, when he first approached members of ASK and MCC/Nashville with a proposal for the auction and a prospective donor list that would grow to include more than 1300 names.

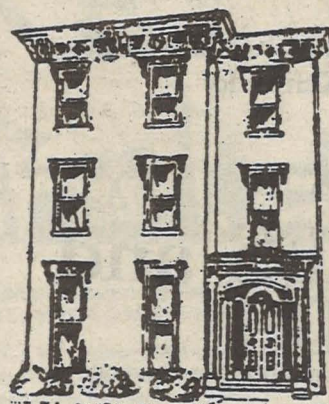
Isaacs, who has attended MCC for almost

two years, emphasized the importance of the sale.

In its first year of existence, Isaacs said, "ASK has done some really good things." He also praised the work of the church, saying he hoped the sale would help the church with its goal of moving to larger quarters in order to expand services. •

Dare

3



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and AIDS Southern Kentucky
present



CELEBRITIES and FRIENDS

The Gay and Lesbian Sale of Sales • Something for Everyone



June 17, 1989 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
The Gas Lite Lounge
167-1/2 Eighth Avenue North
Nashville, TN

General Sale and Auction Preview 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Auction 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Nearly 300

books, records, films, works of art, theatre
and film posters, magazine subscriptions,
T-shirts, ashtrays and a flying flamingo hat
have been donated. Most have been autographed.

Many of these items represent the work of:

Ned Rorem, Holly Near, Patricia Nell Warren,
Romanovsky and Phillips, Lyn Lavner,
Kay Gardener, Michael Callen, Rita Mae Brown,
Krandell Kraus, Sarah Shulman, Harlan L. Dalton,
Warren Blumenfeld, Burton Clarke, Allison Bechdel,
Camilla Decarnin, Suzanne Pharr, Richard Hall,
Florine DeVeer, Alice Bloch, Lee Lynch, Sarah Aldridge,
Winston Leyland, Christopher Makos, Ken Kaak,
Howard Cruze, Donald Simonson, Nick Backes,
Felix Irizarry, Phil Flasche, Etienne, Vernon Ray Luther,
Pédro Almodóvar, Phil Zwickler, David Stuart,
The Cast/Cats, The Cast/Les Misérables,
The Cast/Nunsense, The Cast/Phantom of the Opera,
Bette Midler, The Washington Blade,
The George Mavety Media Group,
Off Our Backs, Our World, Chiron Rising,
Mr. Leather Inter-national, Woodswomen,
Colorado Gay Rodeo Association and Hot Hats/Key West.



For further information, contact:

Billy Isaacs 502-781-4430
Paul Tucker 615-320-0288
Reg Laswell 502-843-9619

FACES O

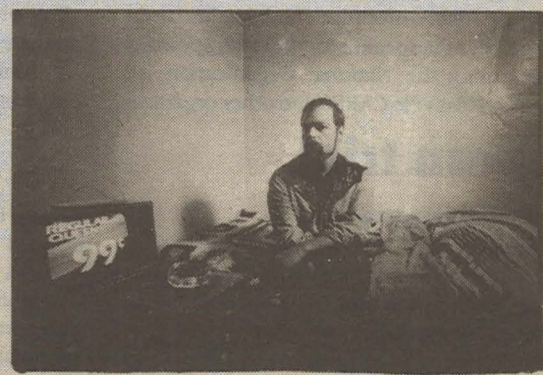
"I was
able to relax
and sleep
today. Most
of my day
was spent
napping
with Mom.

What a
comfort it is
to lay my
head on her
breast and
rest like a
baby again."

— from the
introduction
to Epitaphs
for the
Living,
written by a
person with
AIDS August
5, 1987, 16
days before
his or her
death.

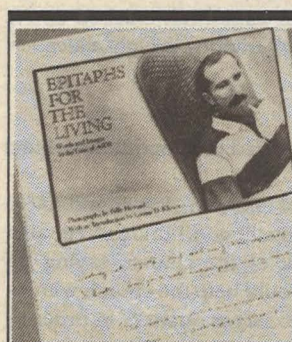


My mother gave me a surprise birthday party for my 30th birthday. She wanted real candles on my cake, finding them only after going to three different candle shops. I didn't even notice that there weren't any candles on the cake later she told me that when it came time to put the candles on the cake that she decided against it. She thought that some of the people wouldn't want me blowing out the cake.
It has been especially difficult for me being a woman. It's different.
I'm afraid of some things, but not of life.
I've found I've been able to fulfill some of my dreams.
Sometimes I feel like a little girl starting all over.
R. Griffin



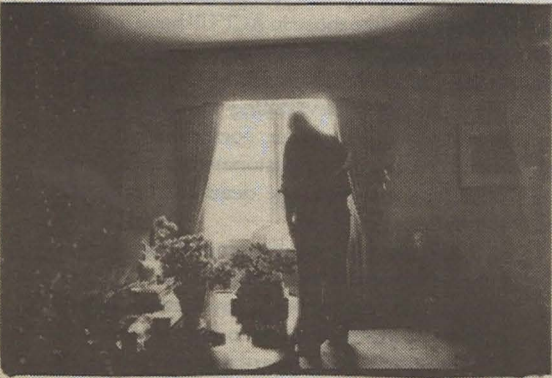
In the midst of illness, rejection, isolation and
probably death, - out of the darkness - hands reaching
out - not family, friends or lovers, but strangers
loving, caring, giving of themselves - have renewed my
faith and are my strength - I love you

R. Griffin



Epitaphs for

F A I D S



I am an anonymous person with AIDS. I have lived with my homosexuality and with God for forty years working productively and giving of myself to others as a teacher and artist. I am one of the multitudes who must be invisible.

There are hidden homosexuals and hidden persons with AIDS because many religions, their own teachings and judge homosexuals. Church and government have yet to fully come to terms in both practical and compassionate ways with the seriousness and urgency of needed GAY HUMAN RIGHTS. Repudiation, condemnation, intimidation and active persecution abound. These anonymous lives are forced to view life's widest scope of experiences while pursuing their everyday existence with private heart and private bravado.



I'm a Person with AIDS! More importantly I'm an African American homosexual with AIDS. There crosses to bear. Before I can deal with the disease, I have to deal with the racism and the homophobia. One day people will not judge a person by the color of their skin, their sex, or their sexual preference, but the content of their character. I hope that day is almost here!

Marquis D. Walker

BEGINNING IN February 1986, Billy Howard traveled to Atlanta and Augusta, Georgia; Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Washington, D.C.; New York; Chicago and San Francisco to make photographic portraits of persons with AIDS (PWAs). The photographs, each accompanied by a handwritten message from the subject, are published this month as *Epitaphs for the Living*.

Epitaphs is extremely moving. Hunter does not romanticize death or victimize his subjects. He is not sentimental or sanctimonious. Instead, the photographs are beautifully plain, presenting the subjects in their home towns, living rooms, hospital rooms.

These forthright photographs, and the subjects' own words, are a powerful way to tell the story of how AIDS, in ways unlike other catastrophic illnesses, affects those who have it. The PWAs speak often of fear, loneliness and anger, but they also speak of hope, love and strength.

Hunter commented that he expected the project to be oppressive, but found it just the opposite. "What has happened to these people and their bodies is one thing, but what is happening is also an amazing affirmation of life."

Howard is the director of university photography at Emory University. He will donate his royalties from the slaze of the book to the Design Industries Foundation for AIDS (DIFFA) and DIFFA's Atlanta affiliate, Heart Strings, for support of AIDS research and social services.

The photographs and statements are also on exhibit at the International Center of Photography in New York through June 18.

Epitaphs for the Living: Words and Images in the Time of AIDS. Photographs by Billy Howard. Introduction by Lonnie D. Kliever. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1989. \$26.95 until September 1, \$35.00 thereafter.

— **SHERRE DRYDEN**
Book Editor

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Answering service 24 hours call (901) 762-8401
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For information on individual or group counseling
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Dare

TENNESSEE'S LESBIAN AND GAY NEWSWEEKLY

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

June 9 - 15, 1989
Volume 2, Number 23

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SOAPBOX

Directing the dirge

by CAROLE CUNNINGHAM
Staff Writer

HAVING THROUGH CUSTOM grown used to the endless succession of AIDS events that annually mark the progress of the disease and the paltry efforts major governments have made in the AIDS crisis, I still feel hope and relief when I discover a front-page account of ACT UP-styled activists protesting during the convocation of the Fifth International Conference on AIDS.

I remember seven years ago, when the First International Conference was a gleam in no one's eye, rushing out of my office after work to pick up the issue of *Newsweek* that my coworkers had shown me earlier that day: on the cover were two bright, healthy-looking gay men holding each other. The news according to *Newsweek* was not that these men were gay, but that gay men were dying of AIDS.

But the news for me was about being gay — about being on the cover of *Newsweek*, with a name and a face and a story. That article, along with Adrienne Rich's poetry and the stories in the *Seattle Times* about gay-bashing, make that summer one in which my identity became clarified, perhaps even fixed, by a sense not simply of the disaster that the AIDS crisis surely meant, but of the pride and the power attending the declarations of the men on *Newsweek's* cover.

AIDS had not debilitated them or crushed their spirit: it had, in fact, made them realize a kind of spirit they had never felt before.

The herculean efforts made by many AIDS healthcare and service providers to separate gay issues from AIDS issues, has meant a disease that primarily affects marginalized populations has itself become increasingly institutionalized: the metaphors once attached to the disease itself are now attached primarily to the people with the disease, while AIDS itself joins a host of other incurable diseases for which researchers write grant proposals, hold medical conferences and gather data regarding the scope and impact of the disease into the next century.

ACT UP PROTESTERS marching into so academic a setting strike what now seems to many like an increasingly discordant note. Reading manifestos about pharmaceutical monopolies on AZT and other experimental treatments, about the discrimination people with AIDS continue to endure, about the pandemic passivity of governments in the face of so devastating a health and education crisis, begin to seem to those who study, evaluate and count during the crisis to be overdramatic, a little embarrassing and quite frankly naïve.

Even gay activists seem to have become overwrought with this recalcitrant "fuss" about AIDS. After all, it does indeed affect only a minority within a minority and fewer of those are becoming infected as a result of our enviable educational programs. Shouldn't we, ask some activists, be getting on with the business at hand: gay and lesbian rights, spousal rights, anti-discrimination ordinances?

Reflecting on the coming NAMES project Quilt piece's visit to Nashville, I can't help wondering whether efforts such as these have contributed more to our empowerment or our enervation. The NAMES Project has from its beginning avoided contextualizing itself politically: it is an experience of mourning, not an

experience of protest. It measures the scope of devastation, like the scientists and bureaucrats; it does not march in the streets, it does not raise its fist in anger. It does not ask "why" so much as detail "who" and "how many."

The somber spirit imparted by displays of the quilt often goads some gay and lesbian activists into attacks on AIDS activism itself as engendering a spirit of defeat and resignation. But activists like those in ACT UP have refused to become complacent.

They have refused to accept the notion that AIDS (however devastating it has been) has somehow directed our community toward more "moral," compassionate activities and ends, like mourning the dead and caring for the dying.

While recognizing the ennobling dimensions of struggles with fatality, ACT UP has always said "yes" to being gay as resolutely as it has said yes to life and to the activism that affirms human lives rather than apologizing for them.

MEANWHILE, THIS BEAUTIFUL, overwhelming record of our loss travels the nation and the world witnessing through its mute cloth panels the dimensions of our despair. The thought of viewing the quilt without ACT UP members present to remind us of what needs to be done as well as what has happened is perhaps the most sobering and disturbing thought of all.

If thought of as a dirge, the quilt, the conferences and the consoling of one another do what they should do — because a dirge is a lament, but also a command, a command to the God or gods to direct our steps.

Dirige, the first word in the Mass for dead, means "direct," as in "direct my steps." If the quilt can be a vehicle for our activism, pointing a direction into the future as well as being a mirror of our past, it serves us well. If it does anything less, we who view the quilt suffer a defeat nearly as dangerous and final as the deaths of those the quilt commemorates.

We should give our tears for the dead and our souls and our dollars to the men and women in groups like ACT UP, who fight for the living. Like Edna St. Vincent Millay in her "Dirge Without Music," they understand what has been lost and what stands to be lost through complacency:

*I am not resigned to the shutting away of
loving hearts in the hard ground.
So it is, and so it will be, for so it has been,
time out of mind:*

*...with lilies and with laurel they go; but I
am not resigned.*

*They are gone. They have gone to feed the
roses. Elegant and curled.*

*Is the blossom. Fragrant is the blossom. I
know. But I do not approve.*

*More precious was the light in your eyes
than all the roses in the world.*

*Down, down, down into the darkness of
the grave*

*Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender,
the kind;*

*Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty,
the brave.*

*I know. But I do not approve. And I am not
resigned. •*

PAGES

Permanent Partners*Permanent Partners.* Betty Berzon. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1988. \$18.95.reviewed by **HARRISON HICKS**

Staff Writer

ONE OF THE FOREMOST issues in the lesbian and gay community today is the validity of lesbian and gay relationships as alternatives to the heterosexual "norm" of the traditional nuclear family. As lesbians and gay men have fought for other issues in the social and political arenas, more have come to realize the importance of our partnerships in the face of a culture geared almost exclusively to validating heterosexual unions.

One has only to look at one of the most supposedly "liberal" of our institutions, publishing, to see how oppressive this mindset can be; countless books appear every year on the subject of improving and preserving heterosexual relationships, with only an occasional mention in various sex manuals about a mysterious "other ten percent."

Thus, when a book dealing with lesbian and gay relationships is published, it is almost a cause for celebration, particularly when the book is as insightful and thoughtful as Betty Berzon's *Permanent Partners*.

Berzon, a psychotherapist, is especially well-equipped to deal with the subject, having counseled same-sex couples for the past fifteen years.

Instead of looking at lesbian and gay partnerships as tentative joinings, the lesbian and gay community must change its attitude, asserts Berzon. She notes that when heterosexual couples marry, they expect the relationship to be permanent, while, on the other hand, lesbians and gay men "tend to approach their partner relationships with the hope that these will be long lasting, even though this prospect is largely unconfirmed by their own experience and that of most of the people they know."

This attitude must change before the lesbian and gay community can find the strength to accomplish its many goals.

As she writes in her introduction, "Mainly, this book is about reinventing our gay and lesbian relationships. It is about learning to imbue them with all the solemnity of marriage without necessarily imitating the heterosexual model."

IN HER EXAMINATION of such a reinvention, Berzon looks at several areas, starting with the need to build compatibility in relationships.

All too often, she writes, lesbians and gay men look for physical types which fit into broader relationship fantasies. Using illustrations from her practice and amusing anecdotes from her personal life, Berzon explores this fallacy and shows how people can build relationships based on compatibility as well as

physical attraction.

Other subjects tackled include homophobia and its effects on relationships. While not much new is said here, Berzon does a good job of encapsulating the dangers of homophobia to relationships, especially when it becomes internalized in the partnership.

The book is at its best, though, when dealing with ways for partners to increase communication and intimacy.

In her chapter entitled "Fighting the Good Fight," for example, Berzon states her belief that creative conflicts and "fair fighting" are constructive tools to increase intimacy in relationships.

To that end, Berzon lays down some ground rules for couples having disagreements. First, she writes, couples must be willing to fight, willing to trust in the strength of their relationship to withstand disagreements and differences.

Couples must also be specific about their complaints and not deliver blanket condemnations, and partners must be specific in the changes desired in relation to their complaints. To fight the "fair fight," Berzon also believes that partners should send "I" messages, not "you" messages, which tend to put the other partner on the defensive.

Other issues concerning intimacy covered by Berzon include chapters on jealousy, communication, money issues, legal steps to em-

power relationships, and an excellent chapter on sexual communication in which Berzon presents several exercises designed to increase sexual intimacy in relationships.

IN LIGHT OF RECENT publicity dealing with lesbian and gay family units, particularly media reports such as ABC-TV's recent 20/20 report on lesbian families, Berzon's chapters on lesbian and gay partnerships as part of a larger picture are quite interesting and thought-provoking.

While not saying anything particularly earth-shattering on the subject of dealing with relatives and the rest of the world, Berzon does accomplish tying our relationships with the outside world into her main theme of the strength and empowerment possible in permanent partnerships.

In such partnerships, Berzon writes, couples are making a statement to society, for "like it or not," she says, "the battle against bigotry belongs to every gay man and lesbian woman."

And in that battle, perhaps we can find some companionship along the way, with help from Betty Berzon, of course. •

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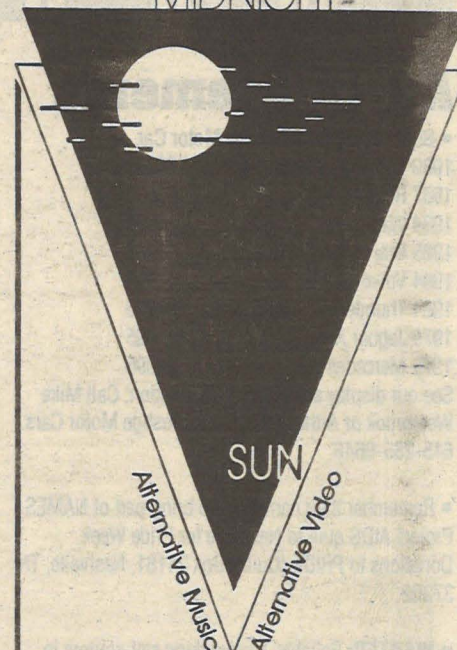
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• J.S., you're nothing but the biggest tramp in Germantown. Happy birthday from all the gang.

• Dear Lord Gargantua: I love you, for sentimental reasons. And, you can always guest star on my game show anytime. Mr. Fatty.

S C R E E N S

Earth Girls Are Easy

reviewed by **JEFF ELLIS**
Managing Editor

"HEY, EVERYBODY, we're gonna do a makeover!"

When the staff and customers at L.A.'s tongue-in-cheek Kurl Up and Dye beauty salon shout that magical phrase, you know you're in for a to-dye-for fun time. Dressed up in '90s-fashion kitsch and clutter, the Kurl Up and Dye has the answer to anyone's problems: go platinum!

The beauty makeover is just one of the many zany goings-on in *Earth Girls Are Easy*, the wacky new movie which asks the musical question, "Can a manicurist find true love with an extraterrestrial covered in blue fur?"

Starring recent Academy Award-winner Geena Davis as the put-upon, cheated-on manicurist — imagine Madge (of Palmolive liquid fame) on acid — *Earth Girls Are Easy*, with any luck, sets the tone for Hollywood's musical comedies of the 21st century. Like Frankie and Annette's beach blanket movies of the '60s and the backstage "Go out there a kid and come back a star" musicals of the '30s, *Earth Girls* breaks new ground with its relentlessly funny script, songs and performances.

Davis' Valerie is a valley girl with a mission: to lift the art of manicures to new heights. But, unfortunately her M.D. fiancé (ex-Saturday Night Live regular Charles Rocket, who may be remembered by some Nashvillians as Channel 5's Charles Kennedy) hasn't had sex with her for two weeks and Valerie's worried: "At the rate we're having sex, we may as well be married already."

Valerie's perky boss Candy — the maven of mascara, the empress of henna — knows just the cure for the doctor's lovesick blues: the aforementioned makeover. In no time, Candy (MTV's Julie Brown of *Just Say Julie!* fame) and company have transformed brunette Valerie into a platinum-blond bombshell ready to get her man. The makeover song, with a nod to *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," includes the line, "Talk to me Max Factor, tell me all about it!"

Meanwhile, back at Valerie's suburban ranch, the love doctor, as he calls himself, is concerned with seducing a buxom nurse

when our val Val unveils her new look. Not a good move, doc.

Valerie then proceeds to put his football in the microwave, break his cologne bottles with his putter, mangle his watch in the garbage disposal and generally trash the place — all to the tune of a lovely ballad.

The next day, trying to get in touch with herself while nursing her tan at poolside, Valerie is shocked to find "a giant blow-dryer" in her pool: a UFO. On board she finds three extraterrestrials covered in fun fur ("I see split ends are a universal problem," Candy says.) that's done up in coordinating day-glo colors. They have to wait until the pool's drained before heading back to their planet.

Val, the consummate hostess, then prepares lunch for her guests: low-cal Pop Tarts and eggs. But, wait, what's she going to do with the three aliens?

Cute Candy's advice to Valerie is pragmatic: "Sit down. Relax. Take a mental margarita." Then she does what she does best — a beauty makeover. When she's through, the three extraterrestrials don't look a bit like E.T. or Alf.

Instead, Candy has transformed them into typical California hunks (played by Jeff Goldblum, Jim Carrey and Damon Wayans)

whose knowledge of earth comes from cable T.V. Goldblum is presented as the ultimate hunk, but I'd drink Carrey's bathwater any day.

Before we know it, Valerie and head spaceling Mac (Goldblum) find themselves falling in love, despite Val's fears that "we may not be anatomically correct for each other."

Of course, they are, and the stage is set for a sort of zonked-out version of *E.T. Meets Frankie and Annette*. It's all great fun, slightly decadent and depraved (What do you expect? Julie Brown did, after all, write "The Homecoming Queen's Got a Gun" before she wrote this movie.), but mostly sweet and charming.

NOT THAT IT'S MAUDLIN, mind you. Instead, *Earth Girls* is terrifically funny, a movie sendup of San Fernando Valley gaudy excess and vulgarity, a 24-hour-a-day, laugh-a-minute riot of fluorescent colors and danceable music — a place where blondes (natural and otherwise) do indeed have more fun. •



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Q U O T E S

Never the twain shall meet, er, meet

"Nearly 80% of college students say religion is important in their lives but their faith has relatively little impact on their sexual behavior and attitudes."

— Associated Press story on a new Gallup poll commissioned by Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network.

"You think homosexuals are revolting? You bet your sweet ass we are!"
— New York City's Gay Liberation Front, in a

flyer announcing its first meeting in 1969

"Can it be true that the lover of one of our richest women was found in bed with her hairdresser when she returned early from a trip abroad?"

— Former *Chicago Sun-Times* gossip columnist Ann Gerber, who was fired for the remark about talk-show monarch Oprah Winfrey and boyfriend Stedman Graham. Winfrey vehemently denies the rumor. •