

Dare

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 36

TENNESSEE'S LESBIAN AND GAY NEWSWEEKLY

SEPTEMBER 8 - 14, 1989

Tennessee hosts int'l conference

Meet includes Quilt display

by JEFF ELLIS
Editor

AIDS education specialists from around the world will gather in Tennessee this week for the Third International Conference on AIDS Education, to be held at the Stouffer Nashville Hotel and the Nashville Convention Center, September 10-13.

Sponsored by the International Society for AIDS Education, organizers of "Changing Environments: Meeting the Challenge," expect more than 1,000 delegates to attend the four-day conference.

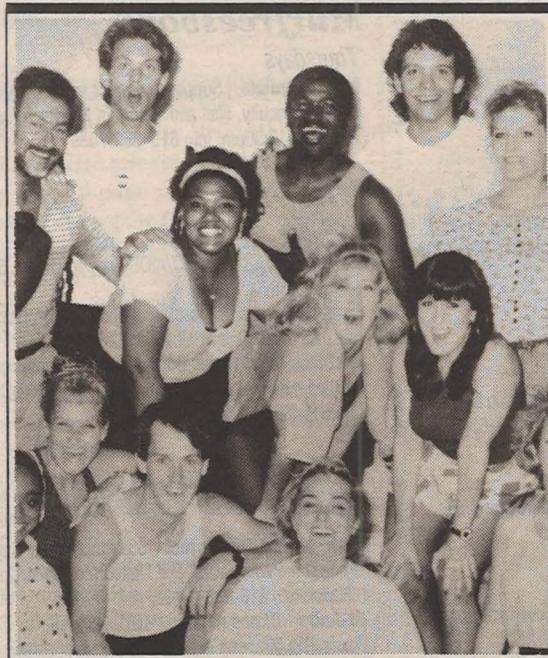
In addition, some 2000 panels of the NAMES project AIDS Memorial Quilt, which will have its final complete display in Washington in October, will be on display at the Convention Center during the conference.

Co-sponsors of the conference include: Vanderbilt AIDS Project (VAP); Center for Social Exploration of the Grubb Institute (United Kingdom); International Interdisciplinary AIDS Foundation (Switzerland); Carolina AIDS Research and Education Project, University of South Carolina School of Public Health; Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, Meharry Medical College, Nashville; and the Brazilian Interdisciplinary AIDS Association (Brazil).

"This conference will be another opportunity to highlight AIDS issues and to raise awareness locally," said A. Gene Copello, president of the International Society for AIDS Education.

Copello, assistant professor at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, is director of VAP and chair of the board of directors of Nashville CARES, a local AIDS services organization.

"AIDS is a multi-faceted problem," Copello said. "Hopefully, this conference will enable people to start talking about the legal and ethical problems of AIDS, along with the other basics of education and prevention. It will give people another opportunity to do more



Both Memphis and Nashville will host gala benefit performances of *Heart Strings: The National Tour*, a Broadway-style musical review designed to raise funds for AIDS education and services. The Memphis performance is set for Monday, September 25 at 8 p.m. [phone (901) 458-AIDS for information]. The show will be presented in Nashville Thursday, September 28 at 8 p.m. [phone (615) 297-5425 for details]. — PHOTO COURTESY MARY DONNET, HEART STRINGS NATIONAL TOUR

thinking."

Run on the European model, the Conference will provide structured and unstructured periods for networking and idea exchange as well as plenary sessions delivered by experts in the field, according to information from the Conference organizing committee.

Concurrent sessions will be classified into three groups: research seminars, roundtable discussions and workshops. In addition, corporations and organizations will have displays at the Convention Center.

• continued on page 4

Openly-gay South African activist visits Memphis

Black and White Men Together brings Nkoli

by JEFF ELLIS
Editor

Gay South African anti-apartheid activist Simon Nkoli will be in Memphis this weekend for a series of events sponsored by the local chapter of Black and White Men Together (BWMT).

Nkoli, currently on a 14-city tour of North America, comes to Memphis from an appearance in Atlanta, according to Irwin Rothenberg, chair of the Simon Nkoli Support Committee of BWMT/Memphis.

Nkoli will speak in an open meeting Saturday from 4:15 to 6 p.m. in the Memphis/Shelby County Public Library's main branch at Peabody and McLean. Following that, what is described as a "consciousness-raising" discussion group and informal potluck dinner will be held at 7:30 p.m. Further information is available by phoning (901) 726-1461.

Nkoli's first visit to North America follows months of delays and bureaucratic snafus, according to tour organizers.

"I anxiously, but with enthusiasm, look forward to meeting and greeting so many people throughout the U.S. who gave me such strong support spiritually, monetarily and otherwise during my detention," Nkoli said.

Nkoli was one of 21 defendants in the notorious Delmas Treason Trial,

charged following revolts in townships surrounding Johannesburg to protest rent hikes imposed by local councillors. Five councillors were killed in the ensuing violence.

Refused bail by a South African court, Nkoli was finally released in 1988 after he and nine others were acquitted of the charges.

Since his acquittal, Nkoli has remained unemployed. Throughout the trial, he was denied both working and visitation privileges.

Organized by the Simon Nkoli Support Committee of Men of All Colors Together (MACT), the Toronto Simon Nkoli Anti-Apartheid Committee and the Zulu AIDS Project, Nkoli's North American visit is designed to enlighten lesbian and gay audiences about the current status of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

Nkoli is chair of the Gay/Lesbian Organization of Witwaterstrand (GLOW), a non-racial gay organization.

"As we greet Simon, it is our responsibility to understand that his struggles are our struggles and our struggles are his," said James Credle, of MACT/New York. "This tour is a unique opportunity for all people of conscious who care about the inhumanity of racist, sexist and homophobic behavior to join together so

• continued on page 4

Tennessee campuses organize for fall

UT/Knoxville, Murfreesboro's MTSU and Nashville's Vanderbilt regroup

by MARK LAWRENCE
Staff Writer

Lesbian and gay student groups at campuses around Tennessee, including Middle Tennessee State University, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and Vanderbilt University, are set to begin their activities for the 1989-90 school year.

"We're just now getting started," said Cherrie Lefevers, president of the MTSU Lambda Association in Murfreesboro.

After the group's first meeting on Aug. 14, they will alternate each week among business, social, educational, and "share" meetings.

"We're basically a social organization," Lefevers said, but added that

educational meetings have covered such topics as AIDS and the legal rights of homosexuals.

Recruitment will be an early priority for the MTSU group, she said, including ads in local papers to increase membership and create "more enthusiasm" for the organization.

At UT-Knoxville, Gay and Lesbian Student Union President Tom Jackson said that organization will be starting with between 40 and 50 members this fall.

"People have had trouble finding us" due to problems with the group's telephone line, Jackson said, but those problems have been corrected.

Besides its weekly meetings, the UT group holds "one or two social activities each month," as well as sponsoring other special events, Jackson said.

Plans for this year include sponsoring an AIDS awareness program and co-sponsoring a performance by gay singer/musicians Romanovsky and Phillips. Last year's activities included a benefit at a local community center and a celebration of Lesbian and Gay Pride Week.

In Nashville, the Vanderbilt Lambda Association will continue its efforts to have sexual orientation included in the University's non-discrimination statement, according to

• continued on page 4

I N S I D E

Dare this week

On the front lines: how Tennessee's AIDS service groups cope with crisis.

Centerpiece, page 6.



Actors' Playhouse gets in Line, and Chaffin's Barn goes to Biloxi.
Curtains, page 11.

Imagine! Patrick Buchanan talks about queers!
Quotes, page 12.



D A T E S

Just like clockwork

Big events

Judy Eron, LCSW
Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Jim Siebold, PhD
Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Individual and Couples Counseling
615 329-1656

Kowalski Chiropractic Clinic

Dr. Deborah Kowalski
Chiropractic Physician

108 Harding Place, Belle Meade
(615) 352-1234

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ATTORNEY AT LAW

WATTS, UNDERWOOD & RUBENFELD
SUITE 150 / 2000 RICHARD JONES ROAD
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37215
615 269-6778

Gay/Lesbian Therapy Group

for information, contact
Steve Davidson, LCSW
(615) 391-0222
Dorothy Stockard, ACSW
(615) 360-7826

Joan Furman-Seaborg, M.S.N., R.N.

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- Reiki Therapy
- Visualization for Health

524 East Iris Dr. (615) 297-6995
Nashville, TN 37204 320-8508

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(615) 227-4457

People to turn to.

Chattanooga Council on AIDS Resources,
Education and Services (Chattanooga CARES)
Box 8402, Chattanooga, TN 37411
call (615) 266-2422

aids Response Knoxville (aRK)
Box 3932, Knoxville, TN 37927
call (615) 523-AIDS

Aids to End AIDS Committee (ATEAC)
Box 40389, Memphis, TN 38174
M-F 3:30 pm - 11 pm Sat, Sun 7:30 pm - 11 pm
call (901) 458-AIDS
Answering service 24 hours call (901) 762-8401

Nashville Council on AIDS Resources,
Education and Services (Nashville CARES)
Box 25107, Nashville, TN 37202
Education call (615) 385-AIDS For information on
individual or group counseling, call (615) 385-1510

this ad appears as a public service of Dare

Chattanooga

Sundays

Metropolitan Community Church Worship service,
Unitarian Church. 7:30pm.

Mondays

Chattanooga CARES Closed support group. 6:30pm.
Info 615 266-2422.

Thursdays

Gay/Lesbian AA Open meeting. Unitarian Church. 8pm.

Johnson City

Sundays

Metropolitan Community Church Worship service,
7pm. Holston Valley Unitarian Church. Info 615 926-4393.

Knoxville

Sundays

Metropolitan Community Church Worship service,
6pm. Corner Weisgarber & Lonas. Info 615 521-6546.

Mondays

aids Response Knoxville PWA Support Group, 7-
8:30pm. Info 615 523-AIDS.

Tuesdays

aids Response Knoxville Circle of Love family and
friends support group, 8pm. Info 615 523-AIDS.
Gay and Lesbian Student Union/UTK Weekly meeting.
8pm. Info 615 521-6546.
Knoxville's Ten Percent Monthly meeting, 2nd Tuesday
only, 8pm. 1320 N. Central. Info 615 521-6546.

Wednesdays

aids Response Knoxville HIV+ Support Group, 6:30pm.
Info 615 523-AIDS.

Memphis

Mondays

Gay Alternative Hour Radio show, WEVL-FM 90, 6-
7pm.
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting.
Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 272-9549.

Tuesdays

Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting.
Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30 and 8pm. Info
901 272-9549.

Wednesdays

Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting.
Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 272-9549.

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 901 272-9549.
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-
9549.
Seriously Sober (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Meeting.
Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 272-9549.

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 901 272-9549.

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 901 272-9549.

Murfreesboro

Thursdays

MTSU Lambda Support group for lesbian and gay
students, faculty, staff and alumni of Middle Tennessee State
University. 7:30pm. Info 615 352-7039

Nashville

Mondays

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.
Vanderbilt AIDS Project Story and Poetry Support
Group (for PWAs), West End United Methodist Church.
6:30pm. Info 615 322-2252.
AI-Anon Closed meeting, MCC. 6:30pm.
Nashville Women's Alliance Meeting, at the Book
Oasis, 2824 Dogwood Pl. 2nd and 4th Tuesdays only.
7:30pm. Info 615 292-7100.
P-FLAG Meeting of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and
Gays, 4th Tuesday on Unitarian Church. 7:30pm. Info 615
662-0332.

Sober Sisters (Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous) Open
meeting, MCC. 8pm.

Wednesdays

Sex Addicts Anonymous Closed meeting for gay men
and lesbians. MCC. 5:30pm.
Nashville CARES Newcomers Group. 6pm. Info 615
385-1510.
Affirmation Meeting for lesbian and gay United
Methodists. 4th Wednesday only. 7pm. Info 615 366-6448.
Gay Parents Support Group Meeting, MCC. 1st
Wednesday only. 7pm. Info 615 831-2941 or 615 320-
0288.
Gay / Lesbian Addictions Anonymous Meeting,
Belmont United Methodist Church. 8pm.

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.

Fridays

Sexaholics 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.

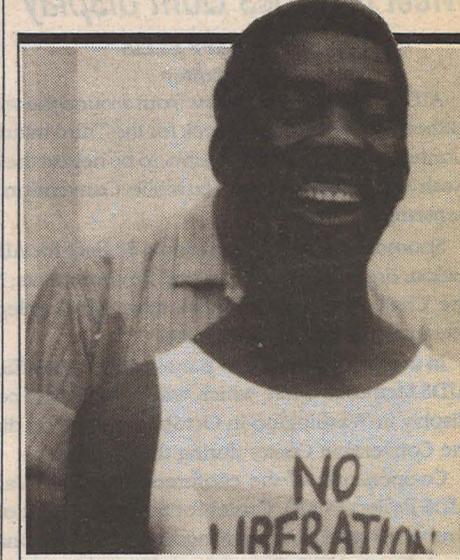
Sundays

Metropolitan Community Church Worship services,
11am and 7pm. Info 615 320-0288.
Incest Survivors Anonymous Closed meeting. First
Church Unity, Franklin Rd, 6pm.

Saturday, September 9

Dance The First Gays & Lesbians in Recovery Dance.
Sponsored by Gays and Lesbians in Recovery, Nashville.
Dress casual. Sodas and juices served. Unitarian Univer-
salist Church, 1808 Woodmont Blvd, Nashville. \$3.
9:30pm-1am.

Speech Simon Nkoli, openly-gay South African anti-
apartheid activist, will speak on his experiences as a
human-rights advocate. In Meeting Room B, at Main Li-
brary, corner of Peabody and McLean, Memphis. Spon-
sored by Black and White Men Together / Memphis. Free.
4:15pm. Info 901 726-1461.



South African activist Simon Nkoli

Sunday, September 10

Feminist Book Circle Discussion of *The Dog Collar Murders* by Barbara Wilson. Unitarian Universalist
Church, 1808 Woodmont Blvd, Nashville. Free. 5-7pm.

Thursday, September 14

Film *Streamers*. Short meeting, followed by film. 220
Garland Hall, V.U., Nashville. Sponsored by Vanderbilt
Lambda Association. 7pm. Info 615 297-5352.
Organizational Meeting Middle Tennessee State
University Lambda's first meeting of the semester,
MTSU, Murfreesboro. 7:30pm. Info 615 352-7039.

Saturday, September 16

Video Night Sponsored by Black and White Men
Together / Memphis. 8pm. Info 901 452-5894.
Women's Dance Sponsored by Random Productions.
Beer, setups available. Laurel Theatre, 1538 Laurel Ave,
Knoxville. \$4. 8pm Info 615 688-3428.

Sunday, September 17

Dare First Night Theatre Awards Benefit for Nash-
ville CARES. At Z. Alexander Looby Theatre, Metro Center
Blvd, Nashville. \$10. 7:30pm. Info 615 327-Dare.

Monday, September 18

Consciousness Raising *Reflections and Reverbera-
tions of Simon Nkoli's Visit to Memphis*. Sponsored by
Black and White Men Together / Memphis. 7:30pm. Info
901 726-1461.

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.

BRIEFS

compiled by MARK LAWRENCE

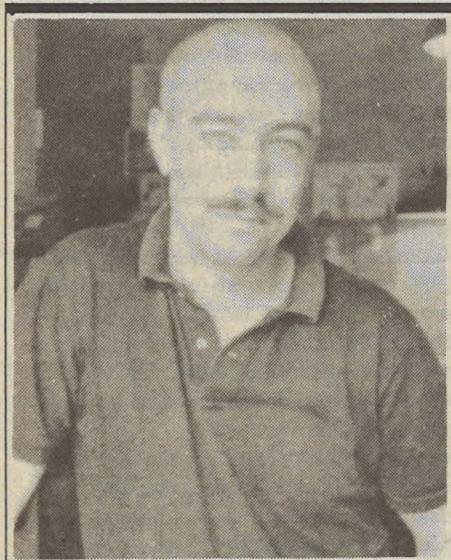
Fed study looks at anti-gay violence

BETHESDA, MD — The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has addressed the effects of anti-gay violence in a national research workshop on anti-gay violence.

The meeting included researchers, psychologists, social workers and members of the NIMH staff, and was chaired by Kevin Berrill, director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Anti-Violence Project. "Although we know that violence against lesbians and gay men is a serious problem, further research is needed in order to better understand its causes and consequences and to develop appropriate interventions," said Berrill. "This workshop, which was the first ever held on this issue by NIMH, will help shape the nature and direction of future research."

Topics addressed at the workshop were defining anti-gay violence, the social and psychological context of homophobic violence, the extent and scope of the problem, risk factors, mental health consequences, and treatment and service interventions.

"This workshop is another example of our continuing efforts to push the federal government to respond to anti-gay violence," said Berrill. "But this is only a first step. We will continue to press NIMH and other federal agencies to respond to attacks against lesbians and gay men." •



Kevin Berrill, director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Anti-violence Project.

Lambda makes list

NEW YORK — Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund is among 27 charitable organizations belatedly approved for inclusion in the 1989 Combined Federal Campaign National Listing, the U.S. government's charitable giving program. Lambda, initially denied participation, is apparently the only gay organization included in the 1989 National Listing.

"The original denial was contrived," said Thomas B. Stoddard, executive director of Lambda. "We were told we had to submit additional information, and then on appeal of the rejection we were told we were barred from furnishing anything else." After the appeal was rejected, Constance B. Newman, the

new director of the Office of Personnel Management, notified Lambda that she would personally review all denied applications.

"We are very glad to have the original inequity remedied, and ecstatic at inclusion in the Campaign," said Stoddard. "Organizations applying to the Campaign should be judged by the nature of their operations, not the content of their advocacy." •

Task Force reports

WASHINGTON — The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force released its Federal Legislative Report, a 10-page summary of Congressional activity during the first seven months of 1989. The report includes House and Senate legislative summaries, information on Congressional Committee reports, and a Congressional calendar for the balance of 1989.

"This report provides individuals and organizations with useful information on critical legislation before Congress," said Peri Jude Radecic, NGLTF legislative director.

According to the report, battles are expected in the coming months over anti-gay amendments to the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, the Senate AIDS appropriations bill, the District of Columbia appropriations bill, and funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.

"We anticipate a very high level of activity on bills important to the lesbian and gay community," said Radecic. •

HRCF seeks interns

WASHINGTON — The Human Rights Campaign Fund is looking for interns to work in all its program areas, including legislative, political, field, lesbian issues, administration, and public relations.

"This is a great opportunity for someone interested in lesbian and gay issues, or just in learning how government and politics work," said Eric Rosenthal, HRCF political director and coordinator of the intern program. "Interns have an opportunity to make a contribution to the lesbian and gay movement as they work on important Congressional issues."

Interns receive a stipend. For more information, contact Rosenthal at (202) 628-4160. •

Anti-choicers guilty

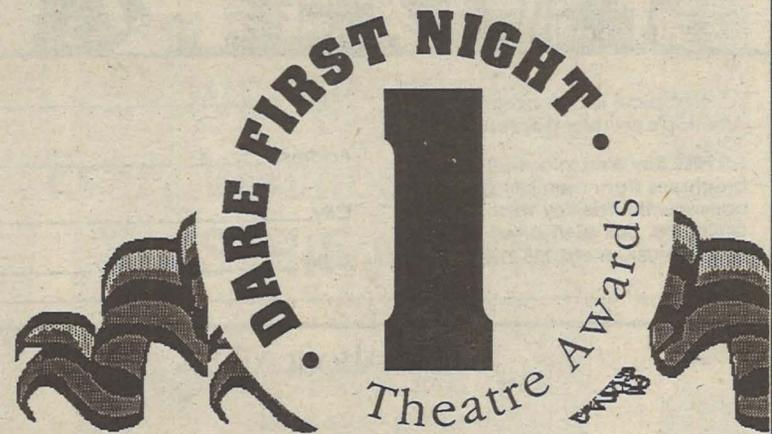
NASHVILLE — Two anti-abortion protesters have been placed on probation after being found guilty of trespassing at the Planned Parenthood clinic on 21st Avenue.

General Sessions Court Judge Bill Higgins ordered Kenneth Najar and Wesley Yoder to stay away from the clinic for the duration of their probation. Higgins also dismissed assault charges brought against the two by Laura Milner, community services director for Planned Parenthood of Nashville, as well as assault charges brought against Milner by Najar and Yoder.

All of the charges arose from an incident on May 20, when Milner prevented Najar and Yoder from entering the clinic. Najar and Yoder claimed they intended to demand access to the clinic's financial records, while Milner said she believed the two were attempting "to go into the clinic and harass our patients." •



And the winner is...



The votes are in.

The best of Nashville theater, as chosen by *Dare* readers, will be honored in each of ten categories. Of course, there'll be singing, dancing, comedy. And the drama of finding out who the winners are, chosen from among the past year's best local productions.

You'll enjoy live original-cast performances from Rave Revues' *Avante Garage*, Nashville Public Theatre's *Quilters*, Gallatin Arts Council's *The Business of Marriage*, Circle Players' *Frivolities* and more.

Hosted by Shane Caldwell,

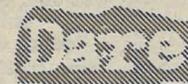
one of the two funniest Sylvan Brothers, the show features special appearances by singer/actress Martha Gabel, singer Thom Byrum and by performance artist Rusel Brown.

Sunday, September 17, 7:30 p.m., at the Z. Alexander Looby Theatre, 2301 Metrocenter Boulevard in Nashville.

Tickets \$10 at the door.

Of course, the evening's real winner will be the clients of Nashville CARES. All proceeds from First Night benefit Nashville CARES.

To find out more about First Night, phone (615) 327-Dare.



Tennessee's Lesbian and Gay Newsweekly

The Gay and Lesbian Student Union

of the
University of Tennessee / Knoxville
meets weekly.

For more information,
get in touch with us:

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University of Tennessee
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Knoxville, TN 37996
or phone
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State _____ Zip _____

Talk About AIDS

Heard Much About AIDS Lately?



*Barbara: Ask me if I've
heard anything else.*

Do your friends talk
about AIDS?

*Barbara: No. I guess it
embarrasses them.*

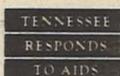
Does it embarrass you?

*Barbara: AIDS isn't exactly
party conversation.*

No, it's not. But how can
we prevent AIDS if we
can't even talk about it?

*Barbara: But how do
you talk to someone about
AIDS?*

Just like this.



Chattanooga Council on AIDS
Resources,
Education and Services
(Chattanooga CARES)
Box 8402, Chattanooga, TN
37411
call (615) 266-2422

aids Response Knoxville (aRK)
Box 3932, Knoxville, TN 37927
call (615) 523-AIDS

Aids to End AIDS Committee
(AITEAC)
Box 40389, Memphis, TN
38174
call (901) 458-AIDS
24 hours call (901) 762-8401

Nashville Council on AIDS
Resources,
Education and Services
(Nashville CARES)
Box 25107, Nashville, TN
37202
call (615) 385-AIDS
(615) 385-1510

a public service message from *Dare* and Tennessee Responds to AIDS

...international AIDS conference here

• continued from page 1

"More than 100 workshops are planned and some 20 primary speakers are expected to take part," said G. Scott Osten, associate coordinator for the Conference Secretariat, who said the conference's location sends "a positive statement to AIDS educators and service providers" throughout Tennessee.

"The main purpose of this conference is to bring together persons in university, governmental and community settings working in the interdisciplinary field of AIDS education,

counseling and prevention," according to organizers.

"Participants will review current approaches and methods in the context of meeting the challenges posed by changing social, economic and institutional environments; and changing communication and information technologies. The adaptation of AIDS education and counseling programs to such change will be emphasized. Policy, psychosocial, legal and ethical issues will be addressed," conference organizers said. •

...Nkoli to visit Tennessee

• continued from page 1

that our voices will become louder and stronger as we diligently work toward a better society in Southern Africa, in the U.S. or wherever our voices of conscious are threatened to be silenced. None of us will be free, unless all of us are free."

Throughout the tour, Nkoli is also seeking funds for the Zulu AIDS Project, which is being developed to provide AIDS education and prevention materials in three or more of the major languages spoken by black and coloured South Africans. Currently, AIDS information is provided only to white South Africans. •

...campus groups organize statewide

• continued from page 1

spokesperson Deborah Burks.

Vanderbilt's Community Affairs Board held committee meetings on the subject last spring, and should be making recommendations this fall. "That's all still kind of pending," Burks said.

In addition to its regular meetings, the group is planning to sponsor a film festival this fall. They sponsored a lesbian and gay film festival last year "that was very successful," said Burks.

Other activities sponsored or co-sponsored by the group in the past have included a speech by Karen Thompson at Women's Week and a performance of the play *Dos Lesbos*.

"We frequently get calls from groups on campus to come and speak in classes," said Burks.

Vanderbilt also boasts a group specifically for law students, the Gay and Lesbian Law Students Association (GALLSA). That group will sponsor a lecture on the legal, medical and psychosocial ramifications of alternative insemination at 7 p.m. Thursday, September 21, at the law school.

All four groups were formed in the past two years, and members of each said campus reaction has been largely positive.

The MTSU group began organizing last October after reports in the student newspaper *Sidelines* about homosexual activities in men's bathrooms on campus. Despite this "really negative" publicity, Lefevers said the group had little difficulty in forming as

a campus organization.

"It was really no big deal. It was a lot easier than we thought it would be," Lefevers said. "We've had real positive input mostly."

The UT group originally broke off from a Christian group, "which to my knowledge is now defunct," said Jackson.

"We haven't had much of a negative reaction," said Jackson, although "sometimes our flyers get torn down."

"We've been very warmly received by the University administration so far," he said.

Likewise, Burks said the VU Lambda group has "sort of been kind of a novelty on campus."

"I've been very surprised by the support we've gotten on campus," she said. "The faculty has just been incredibly supportive."

Lesbian and gay student groups on Tennessee campuses have come a long way since the first on-campus organization at Clarksville's Austin Peay State University was forced to take the State Board of Regents to court to gain official recognition.

At the conclusion of that case, which began in 1979, state officials were forced to officially approve such groups.

The APSU student group, however, has not been active since 1981 when the original movement leaders there left campus due to graduation or transfer.

Memphis State University's lesbian and gay student organization, begun after the APSU decision was handed down in federal court, also has been inactive for the past several academic years. •

...Barn goes to Biloxi

• continued from page 11

it is to mold this motley crew into a crack fighting force. Played by Chris Harrod with a properly menacing gait and tone, Toomey is almost agonizingly believable.

The six young men are forced to endure all the humiliations and horrors of boot camp, hearing all their Sergeant's old war stories and eating disgusting Army food. But forget those Nazis! These guys have sex on the brain: where to get it, what position to do it in, who to do it to.

Amid all that, however, Simon has written people who are rich in character. Each man is presented as an individual and the audience becomes intimately involved in their experiences.

As to be expected of a Simon comedy, *Biloxi*

Blues has its fair share of laughs. But it also has its very dramatic moments — as when one of the soldiers is taken away from the barracks in the middle of the night for being caught in a sexual act with another man. It's a painful moment — and the audience, having gotten to know and to like the man, are made aware of the injustices heaped upon those who are "different."

In supporting roles are Pam Atha as Rowena, the Biloxi hooker with the proverbial heart of gold, who sells Evening in Paris on the side; and Virginia Burke as Daisy Hannigan, a lovely Catholic school redhead with whom Eugene falls in love.

But it's definitely Jerome's show and Chambers seizes the opportunity to portray a totally likable character with warmth and wit. •

First Night finalists announced

from STAFF REPORTS

Finalists in the première presentation of the *Dare* First Night Theatre Awards — recognizing excellence in the Nashville theatre community — were announced last Tuesday.

Finalists for the awards were selected by the paper's readers and area theatre-goers from among nominees representing shows produced since August 1, 1988. Winners will be announced during a gala awards ceremony, set for Sunday, September 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Z. Alexander Looby Theatre, 2301 Metrocenter Boulevard, Nashville.

Actor/comedian Shane Caldwell will emcee the event, which will feature performances by the cast of Rave Revues' *Avant Garde*, the cast of Nashville Public Theatre's *Quilters*; Susanna Rainear from the Gallatin Arts Council's production of *The Business of Marriage*; Rona Carter from the Chaffin's Barn production of *Nunsense*; the cast of Circle Players' *Frivolities*; actress/singer Martha Gabel; actor/singer Thom Byrum; performance artist Rusel Brown and other local entertainers.

Proceeds from the *Dare* First Night Theatre Awards will go to benefit Nashville CARES, a community-based AIDS services organization. Tickets for the Awards will be available at the door for \$10.

Circle Players, which this year is celebrating its 40th season, led the field with 19

finalists; Actors' Playhouse of Nashville followed with 12; Tennessee Repertory Theatre and Second Stage each had 11; Rave Revues, five; Chaffin's Barn, three; and Nashville Public Theatre, two.

Productions leading the field were *Almost A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The King and I* and *Bent*, each mentioned five times, and *Evita* with four finalists. In all, some 22 different productions were mentioned among finalists for the awards.

Finalists in the ten categories are:

- Best Play: *Bent*, Actors' Playhouse; *Lone Star*, Actors' Playhouse; *Night Mother*, Tennessee Repertory Theatre's Second Stage; *On Golden Pond*, Chaffin's Barn; and *Transformations*, Nashville Public Theatre.
- Best Musical: *A...My Name is Alice*, Circle

Players; *Almost a Midsummer Night's Dream*, Rave Revues; *Evita*, Tennessee Repertory Theatre; *The King and I*, Circle Players; and *Pippin*, Circle Players.

- Best Actress in a musical: Adele Akin, *A...My Name is Alice*, Sharon Farmer, *Frivolities*; Martha Gabel, *Almost A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Karen Mueller, *The King and I*; Lisa Mulvaney, *A...My Name is Alice*, and Ginger Newman, *Evita*.

- Best Actress in a play: Dorothy Marie, *Night Mother*; Dorothy Marie, *Transformations*; Siri, *Women Behind Bars*, Actors' Playhouse; Ellen Thomas, *The Mousetrap*, Circle Players; and Anne Tonelson, *Table Settings*, Actors' Playhouse.

- Best Supporting Actress in a musical: Nancy Clymer, *Pippin*; Martha Gabel, *Pippin*; Valerie Green, *Almost A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Shelean Newman, *Evita*; Lisa Taylor, *The King and I*; and Lari White, *Almost A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

- Best Supporting Actress in a play: Melissa Bedinger, *Dracula*, Circle Players; Denise Hicks, *You Can't Take It With You*, TRT; Elizabeth Moses Mahowald, *On Golden Pond*; Risë Nachman, *Table Settings*; and Nelda Pope, *Social Security*, Actors' Playhouse.

- Best Actor in a musical: Michael Bouson, *Almost A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Anthony Dickens, *The King and I*; Joseph R. Mahowald, *Christmas Memories*, TRT; Brian Mathis, *Unsinkable Molly Brown*, Circle; Frank Preston, *Frivolities*.

- Best Actor in a play: Jim Conrad, *Bent*; Rick Harrell, *Bent*; Joe Keenan, *On Golden Pond*; Phil Perry, *Curse of the Starving Class*, Actors' Playhouse; and Barry Scott, *The Blood Knot*, TRT's Second Stage.

- Best Supporting Actor in a musical: Thom Byrum, *The King and I*; Bill Hood, *Unsinkable Molly Brown*; Ricky Russell, *Evita*; Rick Seay, *Frivolities*; and Barry Scott, *Christmas Memories*.

- Best Supporting Actor in a play: Scott Moreno, *The Butler Did It*, Actors' Playhouse; Myke Mueller, *You Can't Take It With You*; G. Scott Osten, *Bent*; Phil Perry, *Dracula*; and Mel Toombs, *Bent*.

For information phone (615) 327-Dare. •



...division and dividing

• continued from page 10

truth that much of the anger we harbor against each other — especially women against men and men against women — is born of the stereotypes, fear and hatred we accuse straights of harboring against us. This woman is too tough, too overbearing, too uncompromising, too radical; this man is too shallow, too self-centered, too extroverted — he cares only about crotches and Calvin Klein.

The horror we feel at the judgments so many of us secretly and not so secretly pass against each other makes us fall back on masks of pretense and polish in order to get along. We cannot describe why we're not getting along because the truth would make us sick.

Once we have faced down our own fears and hatreds, we can then begin to learn to accept difference, dissent, and challenge within our own ranks.

We may even learn that the truth of our often

invoked if seldom honored "diversity" will indeed set us free — free of the burden of believing we must think and act alike, free of the fear that our organizations are perpetually on the brink of utter doom, and free of solipsistic cant in which our opinions begin to look to us like fact, our theories like truth.

We may then be free of the notion that in disagreeing we betray each other or betray our movement.

Montaigne referred to both the personal and political when he said he did not want to be considered either so affectionate or so loyal a servant as to be found fit to betray anyone.

Perhaps if we allow our loyalties to relax and our minds to think, pushing one another and our movement forward instead of anchoring it on one idea or one voice, we will find our progress is not only more steady and more full of promise, but more full of people. And that's something we could all learn to live with. •

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In 1982, there were only two cases of AIDS reported in the state of Tennessee. Since then, more than 850 cases have been reported to the state Department of Health and Environment.

Tennessee And while the number of cases diagnosed has increased in the past seven years, so has the level of that most important of community response to the crisis: the community-based AIDS-service organization.

In 1982, Tennessee had no such groups. Now, there are six. All rely heavily on the lesbian and gay community for financial support as well as the most critical element — volunteers.

Chattanooga **FROM ITS FOUNDING** in 1986 until October 1988, Chattanooga CARES had an all-volunteer staff. Funds from the Health Department enabled the group to hire a full-time staff member, and now the group plans to use United Way funds to hire another part time.

With the help of some 100 trained volunteers, the organization provides support groups for people with AIDS (PWAs) and for their "families and loved ones," said Kenton Dickerson, executive director.

"We can provide some emergency relief," said Dickerson, adding that "We generally try to work very closely with other social services." The organization currently has about 20 people in the PWA group and 8 to 10 in the recently-formed group for families and loved ones.

"We do a lot of work with gay and bisexual men," as well as college-age youth and women at risk, Dickerson said.

The group has a hotline and a speakers bureau, although Dickerson said the demand for speakers was highly variable.

"Sometimes we'll have two or three programs a week to do and sometimes we go two weeks without any," Dickerson said.

The hotline gets from 20 to 25 calls per day.

They will be co-sponsoring a display of the NAMES Project AIDS Quilt from Nov. 21 to Dec. 1 at the pavilion in Miller Park. The event is being funded by the Lyndhurst Foundation and the proceeds will go fund Chattanooga CARES.

The group is also planning a new training session for volunteers in late September or early October, and a Stop AIDS program in January.

Clarksville **ALTHOUGH** somewhat smaller, the three-year-old Clarksville CARES has the same basic goals as its older counterparts in Nashville and Chattanooga, according to Glenn Carter, the group's vice-president.

"We have the same types of goals," he said, "education, prevention, support services."

The organization is only working with a small group of PWAs at the moment.

"We're hoping to grow as we get more volunteers and as we get more referrals," said Carter. "We wish we didn't have to do more."

CENTER Tennessee's AIDS-service

by **MARK LAWRENCE**
Staff Writer

They currently have 10 volunteers going through training.

"We're hoping to have at least one more training session with these people," said Carter. "Basically, we're still in the formative process, even though we've been around for a while."

The group plans to increase its education efforts as well. Carter said a recent talk by Clarksville CARES President Janie Grimes at a Fort Campbell junior high school got a good response, but noted that "We have not at this point been able to get into the Clarksville school system."

Other plans for the organization include recruiting efforts and Austin Peay State University, distributing brochures to increase "awareness in the community," and writing proposals to obtain grants for further work.

aidS RESPONSE KNOXVILLE (aRK) began operations in August 1985, and was officially chartered as a non-profit organization in 1987. Since then, two paid staff members and a 16-member unpaid board of directors have been guiding a variety of efforts to deal with AIDS in Knoxville.

According to Education Coordinator Laurie Forsythe, aRK's offerings include support groups for PWAs and HIVs, crisis-intervention counseling, limited emergency assistance funds, and advocacy to "cut red tape" surrounding Social Security and other benefits.

They also have a buddy group, spiritual counseling, and a support group for families and caretakers of PWAs. They have an AIDS hotline in operation from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and a gay helpline from 7 to 11 p.m.

"The demand for support services is increasing all the time," said Forsythe. "We get more and more calls for support all of the time."

aRK has a speakers bureau and has regularly scheduled seminars and workshops, as well as doing "some media relations occasionally." Forsythe described the demand for speakers as "pretty heavy," especially from the University of Tennessee and other area schools. aRK speakers have gone before professional organizations, mental health groups, churches, "you name it," said Forsythe.

In 1988, the group held an AIDS in the workplace seminar for 50 local businesses, and they have also done a continuing education program for the Detoxification Rehabilitation Institute.

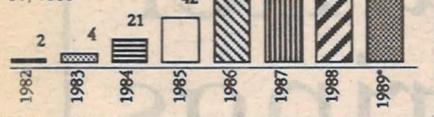
Source:
Tennessee
Department of
Health and
Environment—
DARE STAFF GRAPHIC

R P I E C E

e organizations

New AIDS cases reported in Tennessee by year*

* 1989 figures include only cases reported on or before July 31, 1989



"Our focus in education is going to be more and more in the minority community, women at risk, and in the gay and lesbian community," said Forsythe, although the group will continue its efforts at general education.

aRK has a continuing support grant from Levi-Strauss, and receives educational funds from the Center for Disease Control. They have also received grants from the Melrose Foundation and the Chicago Resource Center, in addition to individual donations.

Memphis

IN MEMPHIS, the Aid to End AIDS Committee (ATEAC) has been working since 1985 with PWAs, people who are HIV positive, and their friends and families.

"We have in place four support groups right now," one apiece for PWAs, HIV positives, family and friends, and women with AIDS, said Rita Underhill, education coordinator. ATEAC is currently serving about 150 clients.

The group has only one full-time and one part-time staff member, Underhill said, but currently has almost 200 volunteers. Although many of these came on to work with Heart Strings, "Most of the people have made a commitment."

The group has trained 95 volunteers as a part of its buddy program. On the educational front, ATEAC has a speakers bureau which makes 10 to 15 presentations each month.

"We've spoken to every group imaginable almost, I think," said Underhill. They also have an AIDS hotline.

In addition to individual contributions, the group's educational efforts are funded by a U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) grant administered by the Memphis/Shelby County Health Department. However, patient services are funded entirely from donations.

Underhill said the group is trying to develop educational materials that are targeted for specific segments of the population, such as Asian-Americans or Memphis' population of functional illiterates.

Nashville

NASHVILLE CARES, the oldest community-based AIDS group in the state, will have been in operation for four years in October and provides a wide variety of support and educational services.

"We really provide two services" with a multitude of facets, said Sandee Potter, executive director.

First, the organization provides help to individuals "to deal with the impact" of contracting AIDS or testing positive for HIV infection, Potter said.

"We provide individual counseling as well as group counseling," she said. They have two social workers as full-time staff, and "We work closely with a number of other public service organizations as well as health care organizations."

The group offers a nutritional program for people with AIDS. "We're in the process of expanding that program," said Potter. "We want to be certain that our clients are able to get the food they need. It's a pretty basic need."

A full-time "client advocate" assists clients both with emergency needs and in getting public benefits.

"The bottom line at Nashville CARES is 'How can we serve the clients?'" Potter said. "That's basically the heart of the organization."

The final full-time position on the Nashville CARES staff is the currently vacant position of education coordinator, which oversees the second of the group's "two services." Educational programs are another area Potter indicated as targeted by the group for expansion.

"We are in the process of developing a much more active community outreach," she said. "We're going to be out there in the community, especially in the gay community. We would love to come up with an AIDS vaccine, but right now all we have to prevent AIDS is education."

The group's educational efforts include distributing brochures, maintaining a videotape library with between 40 and 45 titles, and providing speakers for a variety of audiences. Over 600 people receive the group's free monthly newsletter, which Potter described as "a combination of AIDS education, agency update, as well as what's going on in other places."

Besides the five full-time staff members, Nashville CARES is supported by approximately 100 volunteers. Funding for the group comes from a variety of sources, including grants, individual contributions, and fundraising events such as Heart Strings and the *Dare* First Night Theatre Awards.

"The gay community has been incredibly generous, and we are very grateful for all the money that the Nashville gay and lesbian community has given us over the years," Potter said.

The organization also receives continuing support from the United Way, "for which we are very grateful," said Potter, who added that she strongly encourages people to support the United Way's efforts.

Nashville CARES was one of five AIDS groups in the country to be visited last week by Betti Knight, an Australian AIDS worker who visited four American cities, Nashville, Boston, Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

"What Nashville is coping with now, Melbourne will be coping with in three to five years," said Potter. She said Australia has had fewer than 1400 reported cases of AIDS, "a really small figure," but added that "1400 is 1400 too many." •



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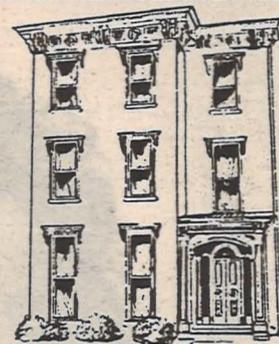
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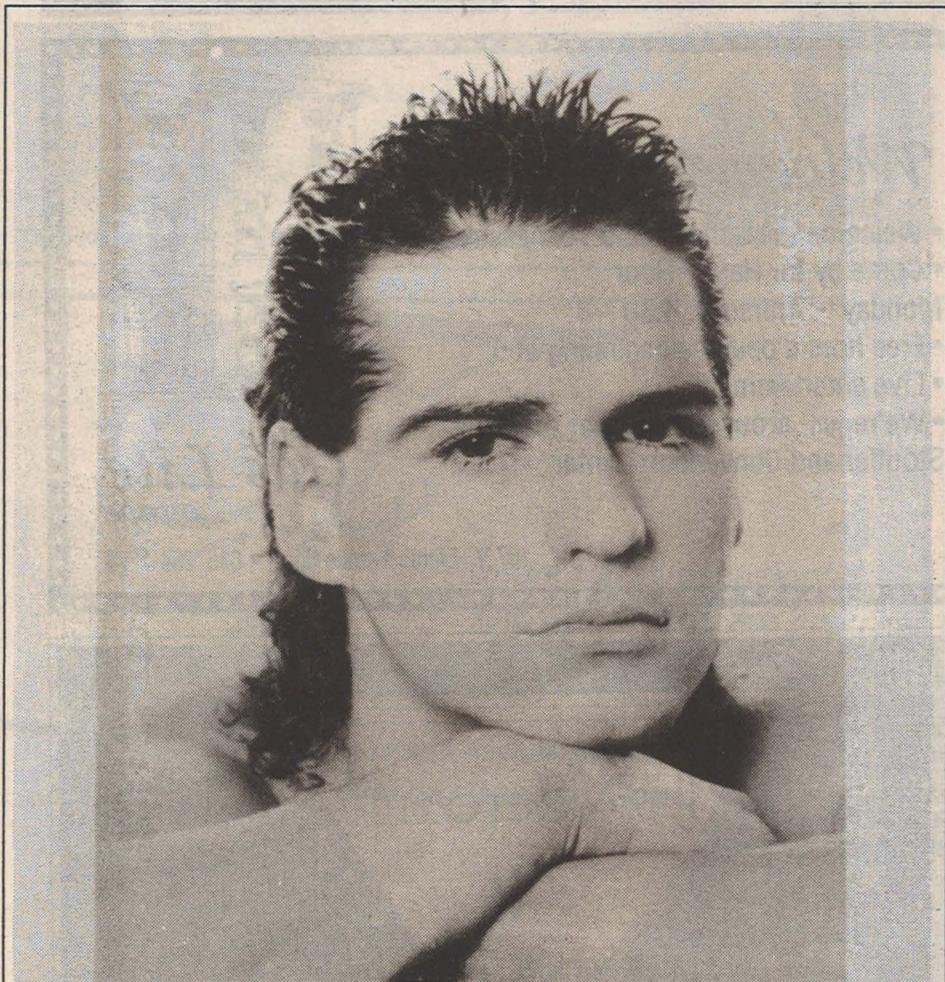
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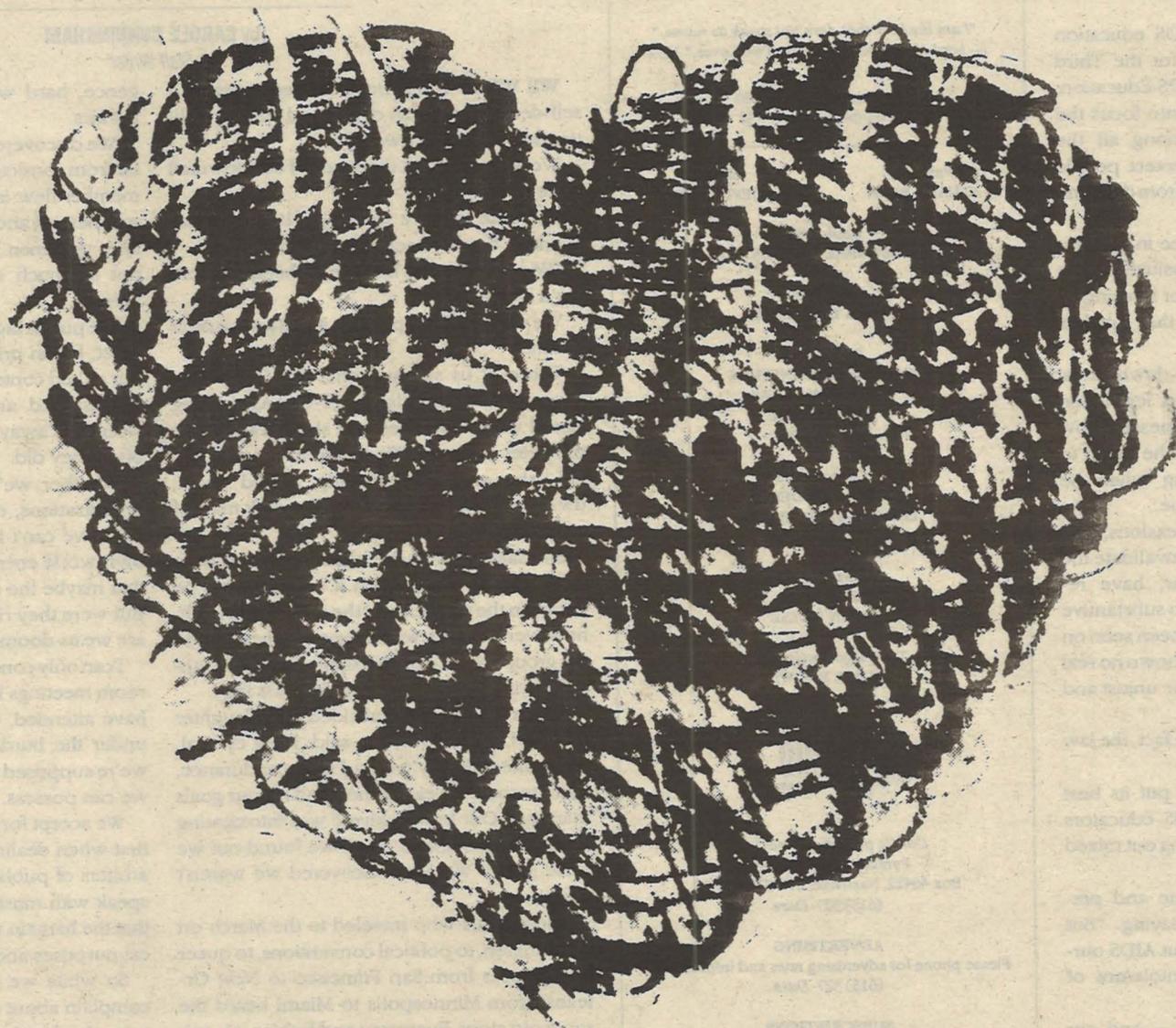
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Heart Strings: The National Tour is coming to Nashville for one night only, Thursday, September 28, at 7:30 p.m., at the Polk Theatre in the Tennessee Performing Arts Center. Outstanding local stars will join the musical revue which benefits Nashville CARES, Minority AIDS Outreach, and the Vanderbilt AIDS Project. Regular tickets: \$25 through TICKETMASTER. Ticket plus pre-show buffet and post-show champagne cast party: \$100. Ticket plus cast party: \$50. Call 385-0140 for special tickets and information.

Heart Strings: The National Tour is a project of DIFFA, Design Industries Foundation for AIDS.

VIEWS

AIDS in Tennessee

AS MORE THAN 1,000 AIDS education specialists gather in Nashville for the Third International Conference on AIDS Education, it helps to bring more sharply into focus the fact that Tennessee, alone among all the United States, has no law to protect people with AIDS or HIV-positive status from discrimination.

What that means is that anyone in Tennessee with AIDS or who is HIV-positive can be effectively denied employment or housing — simply because of the disease that inhabits their blood.

The reasoning behind state lawmakers' decision to pass such backward legislation into law is, at best, unclear. Tennessee Gov. Ned McWherter's admission that he failed to comprehend the bill's meaning when he signed it into law is, at best, vague.

McWherter has, on several occasions, said that he would support efforts to invalidate the law. State lawmakers, however, have remained silent on the issue and no substantive attempts to change the law have been seen on Capitol Hill, and McWherter has shown no real leadership in moving to repeal the unjust and uncompassionate law.

Now, more than a year after the fact, the law remains on the books.

While Tennessee prepares to put its best foot forward in welcoming AIDS educators from around the world, it is sending out mixed messages to people with AIDS.

"We support efforts to educate and prevent," the state appears to be saying. "But we're not very well educated about AIDS ourselves, not to mention being intolerant of people with AIDS."

It is shameful that Tennessee — and our political leadership — continues to validate, even encourage discrimination and ignorance.

Perhaps the Third International Conference on AIDS Education will help to open state legislators' eyes — and their hearts. •

BOX 40422

Thanks!

Dear Dare,

I would like to thank the many people from our community who dropped by the grand opening of It's A Scream! alternative gift shop recently.

Many people took time from their busy holiday weekend to come in and wish us well in our new shop and express how pleased they are to have a place in which they can comfortably shop for gay- and lesbian-identified items without having to go through mail order or go out of town. People also seemed very pleased with the resource center in the shop.

We at It's A Scream! invite you to publicize your event or business in the shop's resource center. We want to be on top of community activities so we may become a focal point for newcomers, as well as us old timers, in the community to go to, be comfortable and enjoy!

Thanks again.
JACKI MOSS
Nashville

Dare

TENNESSEE'S LESBIAN AND GAY NEWSWEEKLY

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

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LETTERS

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.

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ARCHIVES

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

SOAPBOX

On division and dividing

by CAROLE CUNNINGHAM
Staff Writer

WE WERE TOLD from the beginning by a self-declared veteran of gay and lesbian politics that it wouldn't work.

We were told that the seeds of our downfall were already sown.

We were told we would get bored, disenchanted, tired of each other and our cause.

We would need a lifetime of therapy before we'd along.

We were told, simply, that it was just a matter of time.

Those of us sitting in that first Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA) meeting stared with wide eyes and slack jaws at this predictor of doom. We would rise, we would fall, she said. Membership would swell, dwindle, then disappear into the dark maw of activism's night.

She said what all the bitter, seasoned ones said: the division, when it came, would be between the women and the men. And the rift, however it began, would never be healed and the group would dissolve until some naïve, unsuspecting upstarts tried again years later.

When our horror subsided, our laughter returned. Ridiculous, we said. How cynical, we scoffed. Surely we had more endurance, more respect for each other, and for our goals than that. Our brave naïveté was intoxicating in the months ahead. Then we found out we were naïve. We also discovered we weren't alone.

Those of us who traveled to the March on Washington, to political conventions, to queer conferences from San Francisco to New Orleans, from Minneapolis to Miami heard the same old story. Every gay and lesbian organization appeared divided and divisive, and often along gender lines. Their demise was considered immanent by observers and members alike.

So the naysayers at home started to look a little more like the soothsayers they wanted to be. And those of us who believed otherwise began to look not only naïve but a little foolish.

In the two years since T-GALA was formed by about twelve devotés, I have waited to see the chronicle of our death foretold in all its awful, certain glory. Slowly we do seem to have come close to colliding with the destiny we believed we would avoid through dili-

gence, hard work, and consistently correct politics.

We discovered our politics were sometimes far from correct; the methods or manner of one member flew in the face of the methods and manners of another; egos clashed like titans; and, yes, men and women seemed divided, not so much in the open, but behind the scenes.

We put on faces to meet the faces we would meet, but in private we could hardly contain our naked contempt and disappointment, our distrust and anger. We hoped the Others would go away, find a job, find a lover. And often they did.

Whether we're in T-GALA, AIDS service organizations, churches, or other activist efforts, we can't help but recognize we're our own worst enemy. We can't help conceding that maybe the naysayers were right after all. But were they right for the right reasons? And are we as doomed as they believe?

I can only conclude from the informal, back-room meetings I hear about, and from those I have attended, that we suffer immeasurably under the burden of an image we imagine we're supposed to project and naïvely believe we can possess.

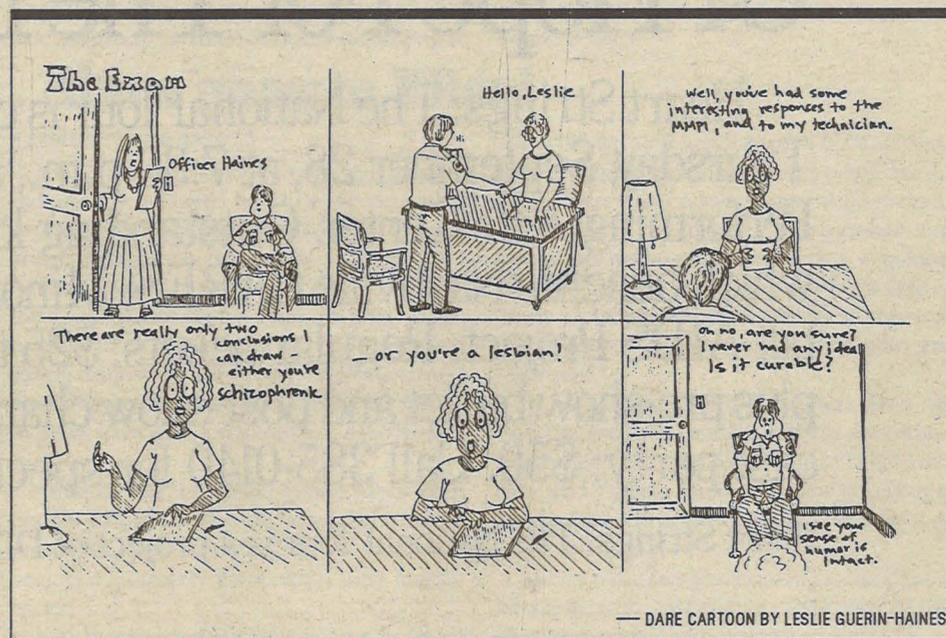
We accept for practical purposes the notion that when dealing with reporters, politicians, arbiters of public morality, that the voice we speak with must be one voice. But we forget that the bargain with reality is made for practical purposes and doesn't reflect reality at all.

So while we flock to the coffee shops to complain about each others' ideologies, haircuts, overbearing egos, and selfish motives, with people who think just like we do, we steer clear of arguments in public with those with whom we disagree.

We think our challenges of one another will divide us. We believe our arguments will confirm what the naysayers said all along: we can't get along, we'll fight, we'll divide.

And we are dividing. Not because we disagree, but because we hardly know any longer what we disagree about. We are afraid to correct or confront each other because we fear being corrected ourselves.

We least of all want to face the rather banal • continued on page 5



— DARE CARTOON BY LESLIE GUERIN-HAINES

C U R T A I N S

Actors' hands us a Line

Line. By Israel Horovitz, directed by Dennis Ewing and Rick Harrell.
Actors' Playhouse, Nashville. Through September 16.

reviewed by **JEFF ELLIS**

Editor

ISRAEL HOROVITZ' *Line* is one of those interesting little urban dramas tinged with acerbic, contemporary comedy.

You know you like it, but you're never quite sure what it's about — or if you really got the point. In other words, it's the perfect late night show at Actors' Playhouse.

Horovitz' play, performed by five capable actors under Dennis Ewing's and Rick Harrell's expert direction, deals with the never-ending battle to get ahead. Here, we're introduced to five not-altogether-likable characters, each striving in her or his own way to be number one.

The five people in the one-act play are standing (better yet, battling) on line, waiting for something. What they're waiting

for, we're never quite certain; it could be to buy tickets for a movie, play or Rolling Stones concert (that's what I imagined while watching the action onstage).

But as they wait, each of the people allows us a more intimate glimpse of who they are and what motivates them to be first on line. What transpires is a no-holds-barred struggle for superiority, the line becoming a microcosm of society's class struggles in which the weak

and/or feeble-minded get left behind, where a woman must sleep her way to the top and where ordinarily nice people become land-locked piranhas.

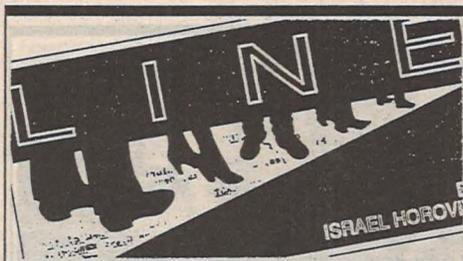
The cast is peopled by interesting individuals who, like Horovitz' characters, look average and act average until they are overwhelmed by the spirit of competition.

Phillip Craig is cast as the slightly dim-witted Fleming, who allows himself to be tricked out of his highly-valued first place on line. Supplanting Fleming, with his sleight of hand and double-talk, is James Brantley as Stephen. Brantley's slightly-crazed delivery is ideal for the conniving, slightly-crazed character.

Actors' Playhouse stalwart Karen

Mundy, in one of her best performances to date, is given the daunting task of playing a totally unsympathetic character, yet she manages to pull it off with style. In fact, her Molly is not the slut Horovitz paints her in the early going: instead, she is determined to gain her place on line any way she can.

Jerry Craighead's Dolan and Barry Lindsay's Arnall complete the cast with carefully drawn performances. •

**Barn does Biloxi**

Biloxi Blues. By Neil Simon, directed by Michael Edwards.
Chaffin's Barn Dinner Theatre, Nashville. Through September 30.

reviewed by **JEFF ELLIS**

Editor

FOR THE PAST 30 or so years, Neil Simon's comedies have delighted theatre audiences, becoming staples in the repertoires of countless community and dinner theatres.

Simon's award-winning "BB" trilogy of autobiographical plays are not the typical farces one expects from the man who brought us *Barefoot in the Park* and *The Odd Couple*. Instead, Simon gives his "BB" comedies a much-needed jolt of dramatic realism and, in the process, gives his audience a more thoughtful — though just as funny — view of the human comedy.

The second installment in Simon's trilogy is *Biloxi Blues*. In its present incarnation at Chaffin's Barn Dinner Theatre, director Michael Edwards has assembled a cast of some of Nashville's most talented young actors who, through the course of the evening, manage to endear themselves to the audience.

Heading the capable cast is Steve Chambers as Eugene Morris Jerome (the Neil Simon character), the naive young man from Brighton Beach who dreams of being a writer.

Unfortunately, World War II stands between him and publication and so he is off to boot camp "in the swamps of Mississippi" — Biloxi, to be exact.

Jerome's comrades-at-arms include Epstein, a Jewish intellectual with a nervous stomach (Brian Russell, who takes top acting honors in this ensemble); Selridge, a somewhat dim working-class young man from New Jersey (Scott Moreno, who's as good an actor as you'll find on a Nashville stage); Carney, an undependable guy with a song in his heart (Lenny Phelps, whose Southern accent seems to come and go; Carney's not a Southerner, by the way); Wykowski, the gung-ho soldier with a perpetual erection (Kevin Coffey); and Hennessey, an ever-smiling, compassionate Irish Catholic (Johnson West in an effective performance).

Greeting the grunts upon their arrival in hot, humid Biloxi ("This is not your regular hot! This is Africa hot! Tarzan couldn't stand this hot!" Jerome laments.) is Sgt. Merwin J. Toomey, a by-the-book taskmaster whose job

• continued on page 4

Biloxi Blues
by Neil Simon

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