

Taking matters
into our own hands?
Gaybriefs, page 15

Dare

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 49

TENNESSEE'S LESBIAN AND GAY NEWSWEEKLY

DECEMBER 8 - 14, 1989

Memphis l/g center opens

from STAFF REPORTS

Over 150 people came together to celebrate a milestone in the life of the Memphis gay and lesbian community last Sunday as the Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center (MGLCC) held its grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony at its Midtown location at 1291 Madison Avenue.

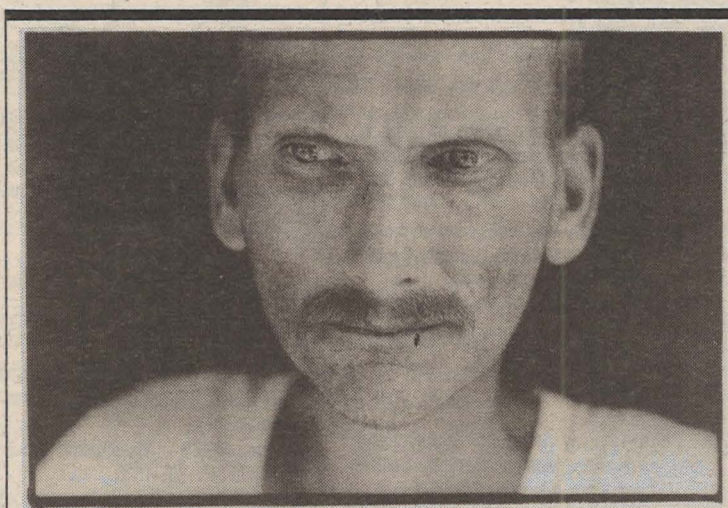
Organizers were overjoyed by the turnout and promised the Center would meet the needs of the community or cease to exist.

In a moving speech, Center Board President Ken Horton challenged those present to mark the date as not only the Center's first day of existence, but also the beginning of its demise. He said he looked forward to the time when the Center would not be necessary, "when gay men and lesbians will be treated as full members of society."

Calling for "lots of people doing a little bit," Horton urged all members of the community to do their part in making the Center a success. Volunteers are needed for a variety of activities and donations are needed to meet the \$35 per day operating costs.

In an immediate show of support for the Center, the Memphis chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and Aphrodite, a women's organization, each presented checks to the Center's fund.

Longtime community and civil rights activist Novella Smith-Arnold challenged the gay and lesbian community to "form a marriage with [her] Community Justice Ministry to provide for all minorities who are mistreated by the larger society."



Photographer Billy Howard captures the faces of AIDS in the book EPITAPHS FOR THE LIVING. *Dare* examines life in the AIDS decade in this week's eightysomething, page 8.—
PHOTO BILLY HOWARD

Harmony Gold provided the musical entertainment that set the tone for the festive evening while guests enjoyed refreshments, toured the center and greeted friends.

Representatives of various gay/lesbian organizations participated in the ceremony, in addition to other supportive groups.

The grand opening of the Center follows more than three years of efforts to establish such a space in Memphis.

During 1989, under the auspices of the Memphis Gay Coalition, the MGLCC Board was incorporated to secure the Center space. In October, the lease on the Midtown property was signed.

The Center has been open for about two months. During that time a number of meetings and social activities have been scheduled there.

For further information about volunteer opportunities and upcoming events slated for the Center, call (901) 324-GAYS. •

NGRA falls apart Controversy engulfs public interest law firm

by JEFF ELLIS

Editor

Amid mass resignations and charges of a power struggle, National Gay Rights Advocates (NGRA), one of only two national organizations specializing in lesbian/gay rights litigation, is at the center of a growing storm of controversy in the national lesbian/gay community.

The controversy surrounding the west coast law firm comes in the wake of the defections of several of the firm's members, including the forced resignations of staff attorneys Ben Schatz and Cynthia Goldstein. NGRA executive director Jean O'Leary had asked the firm's board

to demand the two lawyers' resignations, blaming the two for recent tension at the agency.

Late last month, the board voted to ask Schatz and Goldstein to step down. Days later, the locks on office doors were changed and the lawyers' files removed.

Legal director Leonard Graff resigned in September. Other resignations include those of Bill Eisenbraut, director of community affairs; Ron Ranum, director of administration; Jim McDaniel, development director; Ann Bradley, public affairs director; Cindy Bologna, volunteer coordinator; and Debra White Christensen, O'Leary's assistant.

• continued on page 4

PACT forms to fight racism

from STAFF REPORTS

Seeking to bridge a gap between all races and to combat the still-prevalent racism in the Nashville lesbian/gay community, a new group called People of All Colors Together (PACT) is being formed in Tennessee's capital city.

"We want to include men and women of all races who feel alienated because they are not white," said organizer Phil Thomas. "People will no longer have to go to Memphis or Atlanta to be affiliated with an organization like this."

The Nashville PACT chapter is a

part of the National Association of Black and White Men Together (NABWMT), which has chapters in Memphis and Atlanta. NABWMT originally was considered an organization for those involved in inter-racial relationships. In the past few years, however, the organization has broadened its scope to include the concerns of various racial minorities.

Thomas said the name selected for the Nashville group reflects the organizers' hope to include members of both sexes, as well as

• continued on page 12

Social activism takes new turn

Boy With Arms Akimbo engages in protests around country

by JEFF ELLIS

Editor

Repressive governmental measures and a growing climate of political conservatism in the United States are likely to cause "the new silent majority to finally strike out," according to a spokesperson for a San Francisco-based network of cultural activists known as Boy With Arms Akimbo (BWAA).

The nation's increasingly conservative mood may very well be supplanted by a swing to a more liberal tone, if past trends repeat, he said.

"The Reagan and Bush administrations have pissed everyone off," BWAA's representative told *Dare* Tuesday. "The pendulum swing to

the right was very easy, but the swing to the left will probably be a strong and violent one.

"These traditional values people, such as the Tennessee Coalition for Traditional Values, have to realize that only seven percent of the people in the U.S. are living the way they say they should. Everyone else is living in sin, according to these people."

Founded in July, 1989, among "a loose-knit group of friends," the group is not a formal membership organization. Some 50 to 60 people have been involved in proposing projects, providing graphics, developing tactics and logistics and carrying out actions.

Formed in reaction to Congressional approval of legislation, introduced by North Carolina Sen. Jesse Helms, that restricts federal funding for "sexually explicit" art works, BWAA has been active in a number of demonstrations and protests during the second half of 1989.

"The Reagan-Bush years have been a long, painful era and many of us were finally ready to reassert our personal dignity in the face of a constantly insulting political atmosphere," a spokesperson explained. "The people who started Boy With Arms Akimbo were ready to take activism into critical areas that don't deal with AIDS. Helms' attacks on

• continued on page 4

INSIDE Dare this week

Now we can eat
at Wendy's again.
Cross Country, page 3.



People and places
all over Tennessee.
Local Color, page 5.



Anita vacation
from Anita!
Loose Lips, page 16.



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D A T E S

Just like clockwork

Chattanooga

Sundays

Lesbian & Gay CoDA Co-Dependents Anonymous. Reflections, Harrison. 12:30pm. Info (615) 267-7824.

Metropolitan Community Church Worship service, Unitarian Church. 6:30pm.

Mondays

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

Thursdays

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

Saturdays

Gay/Lesbian AA No-smoke meeting. Unitarian Church. 7pm.

Clarksville

Thursdays

OSGL Austin Peay State University Organization for Support of Gays & Lesbians, group for lesbians and gay men. Rm 4, Archwood, APSU. 4pm. Info (615) 648-7107.

Knoxville

Sundays

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

Mondays

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

Gay Gratitude Group Open, nonsmoking Alcoholics Anonymous. Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church, 3219 Kingston Pike. 7pm.

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) 595-8686.
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.

Fridays

Gay Gratitude Group Alcoholics Anonymous. MCC / Knoxville, 1320 North Central. Noon.

Lesbian Codependents Anonymous At aRk offices. 8pm. Info (615) 933-8393.

Memphis

Mondays

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

Memphis Gay Coalition Business meeting, 1st Monday. Rm A, Memphis Public Library, Peabody & Maclean. Info (901) 324-4297.

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.

AI-Anon Closed meeting, MCC. 6:30pm.
Nashville Women's Alliance Meeting, at the Book Oasis, 2824 Dogwood Pl. 3rd and 4th Tuesdays only. 7:30pm. Info (615) 883-4833.

P-FLAG Meeting of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, 4th Tuesday only. Unitar-

ian 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 / Lesbian Addictions Anonymous Meeting, Belmont United Methodist Church. 8pm.

Thursdays

Family Support Group Vanderbilt AIDS Project. Info (615) 322-AIDS.

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) Belmont United Methodist. 7:30pm.

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.

Tri-Cities

Sundays

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

Tuesdays

Support Group Tri-Cities AIDS Project. For caregivers / families of PWAs, HIV+ and ARC. 6:30pm. 2nd & 4th Tuesdays only. Info (615) 928-6101 or 753-9647

Thursdays

Support Group Appalachian AIDS Coalition. For PWAs, ARC, and HIV+ in southwest Virginia, including Bristol, TN. 3rd Thursday only. Info (703) 985-0131.

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.

Big events



Saturday, December 9

Christmas Party Gay and Lesbian Student Union, University of Tennessee/Knoxville. 8pm. Info (615) 595-8686.

Women's Dance Sponsored by Random Productions. At Laurel Theatre, 1538 Laurel Ave, Knoxville. 8pm. Info (615) 688-3428.

Saturday, December 16

Healing Service 1320 N Central Av, Knoxville. 11am. Info (615) 523-AIDS.

Benefit The Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus. Benefits Gay Cable Network/Nashville. At War Memorial Auditorium, Nashville. Tickets \$10, \$13 advance, \$12, \$15 at door. 7pm. Info (615) 254-8250.

Benefit Chattanooga Gay and Lesbian Alliance. Chattanooga. 7pm. Donation. Please bring toy for holiday distribution by Chattanooga Fire Dept. Info (615) 867-5911 or 267-7824.

Sunday, December 17

Fundraiser For Music City Sports Association. At Warehouse 28, Nashville. Info (615) 385-9689.

Monday, December 18

Meeting Pride '90 organizational meeting and potluck. 1401 Cedar Ln, Nashville. 7pm. Info (615) 297-4293.

Saturday, December 23

HANUKKAH BEGINS

Sunday, December 24

CHRISTMAS EVE

Monday, December 25

CHRISTMAS DAY

Sunday, December 31

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Dance Gays and Lesbians in Recovery. Belmont United Methodist Church, 21st & Acklen Ave, Nashville. 9:30pm - 1am. Info (615) 292-6894.

Monday, January 1, 1990

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Saturday & Sunday, January 1 & 2, 1990

Volunteer Training Vanderbilt AIDS Project, Nashville. Info (615) 322-AIDS.

CROSS COUNTRY

compiled by **MARK LAWRENCE**

Staff Writer

Play controversy results in arson

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — A student who supported the production of Larry Kramer's *THE NORMAL HEART* at Southwest Missouri State University had his house burned to the ground on the play's opening night. Arson is suspected.

Brad Evans, a theater student at the university, was at an AIDS vigil when the fire occurred. No one was injured, but the house was destroyed and Evans' cats were killed in the fire.

A local group called Citizens Demanding Standards has denounced the production, claiming it uses "state funds for the promotion of the homosexual political agenda." Evans had formed an organization called People Acting with Compassion and Tolerance to defend the production.

The campus chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union has called on the FBI to investigate the fire. •

about positive portrayals of homosexuality," said Kosling. •

Council criticized for Farrakhan honor

WASHINGTON — Gay activists have criticized the D.C. Council for passing a resolution praising Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan for his work on an antidrug program.

Activist Phil Pannell said Farrakhan has public condemned homosexuals. "He's an out and out homophobe," said Pannell. Roger Doughty, president of the Gay and Lesbian Activist Alliance may write a letter of protest to the Council.

Defenders of the resolution, including Councilman Harry Thomas, who introduced the resolution, and Lawrence Washington, former president of the D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men, emphasize that the resolution is limited to Farrakhan's efforts against drugs in a local public housing project. •

Court won't consider HIV testing decision

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court has decided not to review a lower court decision declaring unconstitutional a Nebraska state health agency's mandatory HIV antibody testing of its employees and clients.

The case, *EASTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY OFFICE OF RETARDATION V. PATRICIA GLOVER*, was the first case involving mandatory AIDS testing to reach the Supreme Court. Glover and eight other employers argued that the policy violated their Fourth Amendment right against unreasonable searches and seizures.

The agency adopted the policy in 1987 after an employee died of AIDS related causes. The agency argued that bites and scratches inflicted on employees by retarded clients created a risk of the transmission of the AIDS virus.

"It's especially significant because it signifies a willingness to allow the lower courts to enforce principles of medical objectivity against hysterical reaction," said Nan Hunter, head of the ACLU National Gay and Lesbian Rights Project. •

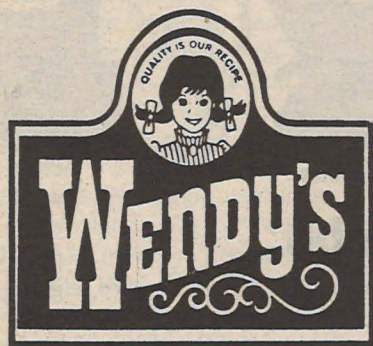
Grocery chain reverses decision on newspaper

AUSTIN — H.E.B., a grocery store chain in Texas, has resumed carrying a weekly newspaper four weeks after it stopped distributing the paper following complaints that the paper carried personal ads directed to lesbians and gay men.

The 17 Austin area stores of the chain stopped carrying *THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE* when it received a complaint from Mark Weaver, president of the Texas chapter of the American Family Association.

Some readers of the paper responded with a boycott of the chain and sent letters to company.

The stores have moved distribution boxes for the paper away from the check-out counters in order to make them less accessible to children. •



Wendy's, the Columbus, Ohio-based hamburger chain, has issued an apology to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation for its previous apology to the American Family Association.

Wendy's apologizes to GLAAD for AFA apology

NEW YORK — The Wendy's hamburger chain has apologized to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation for sending a letter of apology to the American Family Association.

The company had apologized to the AFA for advertising on an episode of *L.A. LAW* which portrayed gay characters in a positive light. The letter was a response to complaints from the AFA.

Susan Kosling, Wendy's consumer relations manager, said the original apology was a "mistake" which occurred when employees processing the AFA letters assumed the complaints were about violence because they concerned *L.A. LAW*.

She said most complaints Wendy's receives about its advertising the show denounce it for violence.

"Had we actually read the letters and then read our own form letter, we would not have used the form letter to respond to complaints



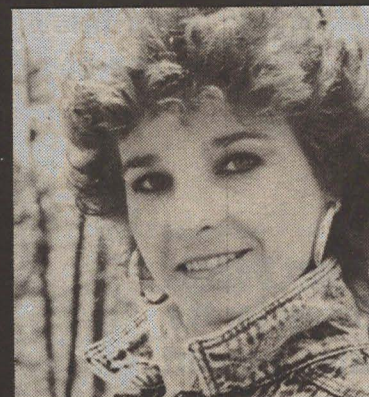
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Free holiday punch and Christmas buffet



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10:30 p.m. and Midnight
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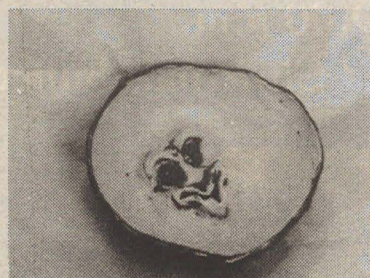
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Sunday Night Dinner Special, Sunday, December 10
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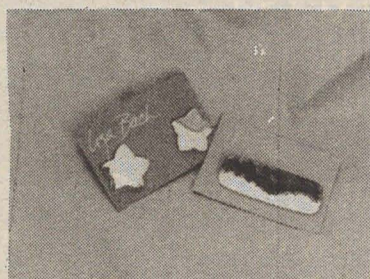
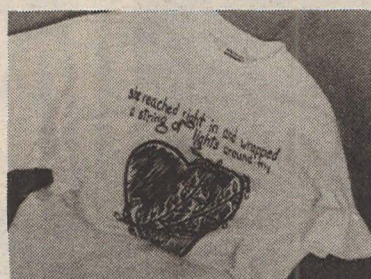
I'm
screaming
of a ~~white~~ *lavender*
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Here's looking at you, kid.
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pair. Pin, \$6.

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...NGRA splits

• continued from page 1

Community leaders have cited O'Leary as the cause for the mass defections, saying the agency's credibility has been severely undermined by the shake-up.

"Jean O'Leary only has one interest, and that's Jean O'Leary," said Fred Ponder, former chair of the NGRA board of directors. "I can no longer condone or support the board when they continue to support Jean O'Leary and not the organization."

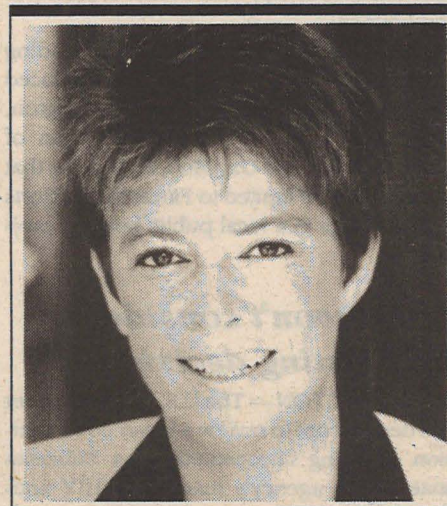
Meanwhile, leaders of four lesbian/gay organizations have drafted a letter to current NGRA board chair Richard White, decrying the "preemptory dismissals" of Schatz and Goldstein.

"The basic unfairness of such a course of action runs contrary to the presumed goals of NGRA and to the principles for which we all

stand in our daily advocacy against irrational employment decisions," the letter says. "None of us would tolerate such conduct in the non-gay world, and we certainly ought not accept it within our own organizations."

The letter was signed by Kevin Cathcart, executive director of the Boston-based Gay and Lesbians Advocates and Defenders (GLAD); Tom Stoddard and Paula Etlebrick, executive director and legal director of Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund; Roberta Achtenberg, executive director of the San Francisco-based National Center for Lesbian Rights; and Urvashi Vaid, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF).

NGRA and Lambda are the only national legal organizations which litigate civil rights cases involving lesbians and gay men. •



Jean O'Leary



Ann Bradley

...boy with arms akimbo

• continued from page 1

the National Endowment for the Arts actually sparked the founding of the group."

Using a broad range of non-violent tactics that go beyond traditional civil disobedience, BWAA works more with intellectual subversion, using modern technologies to harness their "hooligan energy and the same basic motivation of adolescent rebellion."

In response to the Helms-led arts funding controversy, members last August posted five poster-size enlargements of male nude photographs to the granite columns at the Turk Street entrance of the San Francisco Federal Building. Photographers represented were Robert Mapplethorpe, Joel Peter Witkin, Man Ray, Hans van Mannen and Wilhelm von Gloeden.

"Basically, we demonstrated that even if NEA funding for things like male nudes is cut off, you can still sponsor your own federally supported art exhibit by merely finding a large federal support and pasting your art onto it," a spokesperson said.

In October, during a conference at the Lesbian and Gay Study Center at Yale University, New York City attorney Bill Dobbs was arrested for posting "sexually explicit posters" designed by BWAA in the Yale Law School. In

an ensuing scuffle with police, eight other people were arrested.

Charges against the eight were subsequently dropped by the state's attorney's office. Charges against Dobbs were dropped Monday.

"I don't think they dropped the charges because they didn't think they had a case. From what I've heard, the D.A. dropped the case because there were other more impor-

tant matters to deal with," a BWAA spokesperson said Tuesday.

Members of the loosely-organized group remain anonymous at all times: "If someone wants to find us, they can find us," the spokesperson told *Dare*.

"We want to subvert the mass media conventions that trivialize cultural, social and political movements by reducing them to individual 'celebrities.' We also remain

anonymous because all our projects are collaborative and collective efforts," he said.

Shirking the title "artist's collective" for "network of cultural activists," some of the people associated with BWAA are painters, photographers, professional graphic designers, arts critics, art historians or others involved in the art world. However, many come from non-art backgrounds. •



LOCAL COLOR

compiled from STAFF REPORTS

Chattanooga

Little Theatre season continues

Chattanooga Little Theatre's production of the Charles Dickens classic, *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* will complete the 1989 portion of the theatre's current season.

The 1990 portion of the season will open with *I'M NOT RAPPAPORT*, set for January 26-February 17. Edmond Rostand's *CYRANO DE BERGERAC* will play March 9-31, followed by the quintessential backstage musical comedy, *42ND STREET*.

Neil Simon's *BROADWAY BOUND* is set for a June 8-30 run and the season concludes with the "habit-forming musical" *NUNSENSE*, July 20-August 11.

For more information on reservations and auditions, call (615) 267-8534. •

Memphis

BWMT plans "Palace Day"

Members of the Memphis chapter of Black and White Men Together (BWMT) will be holding what is billed as a "cultural extravaganza" on Saturday, December 17.

The day will begin with an 11:30 a.m. brunch at the Asian Palace restaurant, located in the Eastgate Shopping Center, and will continue at the Memphis Pink Palace Museum at 1:30 p.m. for two holiday shows, "Seasons of Lights" and "Voyages of the Mind." Both shows are set for the museum's Planetarium.

Afterwards, the group will move on the museum's exhibit space for "Treasures of the Earth," which features a 3,000-plus carat sapphire bust of Martin Luther King Jr.

Tickets for the Pink Palace are \$4.50. For details, call (901) 726-1461. •

Holiday Gay-Ho canceled

A holiday variety show, planned as a fundraiser for the recently opened Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center (MGLCC), has been postponed.

According to director/producer Matthew Presley, *HOLIDAY GAY-HO* was canceled due to scheduling conflicts among the show's cast members.

"It's impossible to produce the type of show we wanted. These things involve a lot of time in rehearsal and set construction, given by many people. Not to worry, there will be other shows," Presley said.

Current plans call for the show to be presented sometime after January, 1990. •

Nashville

CARES receives \$3000 grant

Nashville CARES, Tennessee's oldest community-based AIDS services organization, was recently awarded a \$3,000 grant to assist in the expansion of the agency's client nutrition program.

Made possible by funding from the AETNA Life and Casualty Foundation, as part of a national effort in conjunction with the National AIDS Network, the effort is designed to promote better nutrition among HIV-infected people.

Nashville CARES began a nutritional sup-

port program for clients in 1988, providing nutritional information and brochures, dietary supplements, food boxes and some client meals provided by volunteers. The AETNA grant will enable CARES to expand its efforts and to provide more nutritional services for clients. •

Poets to open tour at Cohn Center

The 1990 Nashville One Take Poetry Tour, created to promote the spoken word as entertainment, will open at the Cohn Adult Learning Center, located at 48th and Park Avenues, Friday, December 15 at 7 p.m.

Featuring the works of Tom House, Joe Serna, C Ra, James Floyd, Andy Valentine, Ruth Hairston, Laura Rohrer and Pulitzer Prize nominee D. Phillip Caron, the evening will also include Beatlicks, a performing poetry ensemble, comprised of Pamela Hirst, Maria Serna and Joe Speer.

For details, call the Cohn Center at (615) 298-8052. •



Cast members of TRT's *CHRISTMAS MEMORIES* include, clockwise from bottom left: Tim Fudge, Nan Gurley, Shelean Newman and Ginger Newman. — DARE FILE PHOTO

New shows opening

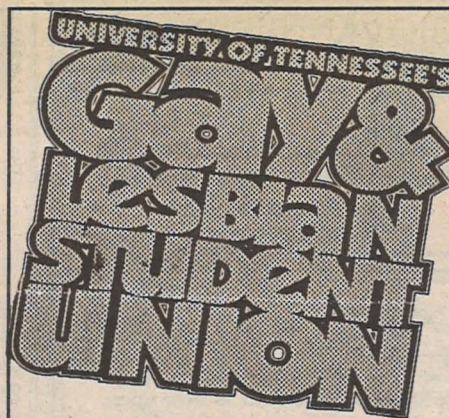
Local theatres will host a number of new productions for the holiday season, including the reprise of two seasonal favorites from last year and the revival of a Broadway classic.

Tennessee Repertory Theatre reprises its *CHRISTMAS MEMORIES*, a tuneful holiday classic, at TPAC's Polk Theatre through December 23. For reservations, call (615) 320-7172.

Rave Revues, performing at Backstage at the Barn, recreates its *SEASONED GREETINGS* for a 1989 run through December 30. Featuring a six-member cast, the show includes a take-off on the Lawrence Welk Show and a collection of traditional holiday songs. For details, call (615) 646-9977.

THE ROYAL FAMILY, the Edna Ferber-George S. Kaufman classic, will be presented at Actor's Playhouse through New Year's Eve. Directed by First Night award winner Mel Toombs, reservations are available by phoning (615) 327-0049.

Chaffin's Barn presents the comedy, *WIFE BEGINS AT 40* through December 30. Tickets include dinner and the show. For information, call (615) 646-9977. •



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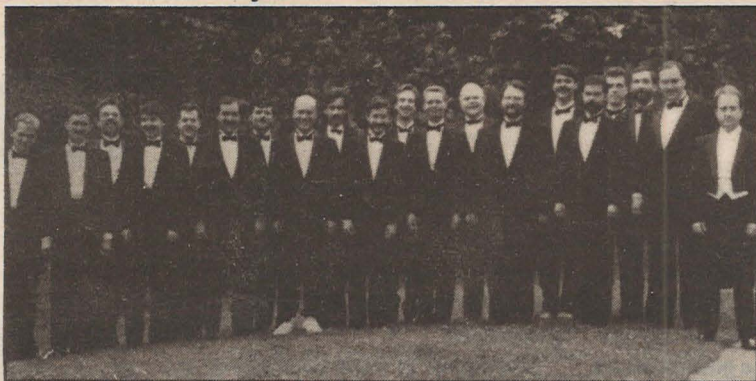
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Gretchen Duoma,
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CURTAINS

Those wacky heterosexuals

A GIRL'S GUIDE TO CHAOS. By Cynthia Heimel. Directed by Mark Cabus.
 Actor's Playhouse of Nashville. Through December 16.

reviewed by **JEFF ELLIS**
 Editor

THOSE WACKY heterosexuals! No matter how hard they try, they just can't seem to get this dating racket right.

But with a script that fairly sparkles with memorable characters and snaps with scathing put-downs and wicked one-liners, A GIRL'S GUIDE TO CHAOS may be just the ticket for navigating the treacherous romantic waters of the '80s and '90s. Directed with a tongue-in-cheek sophistication and a somewhat madcap vision by Mark Cabus, Cynthia Heimel's off-Broadway comedy is given a terrific Nashville production at Actor's Playhouse.

Performed by an immensely talented five-member ensemble, GIRL'S GUIDE is an on-the-money, joke-filled jolt of romantic realism. From the very beginning—and lasting all the way to the finale—it's filled with laughs, chuckles and guffaws; winks, giggles and knowing glances. It could well be the comedy of the thirtysomething generation.

It's a sort of SEX AND THE SINGLE GIRL, updated for the '80s; imagine Helen Gurley Brown all coked up.

As might be expected from its title, A GIRL'S GUIDE TO CHAOS attempts to examine in its own wacky fashion the trials and tribulations of contemporary single life. In the process, such

pertinent topics as where to find dates, what to wear on dates, what to do with dates (you get the idea) are addressed, mostly from the woman's point of view, but with a healthy dose of the male perspective thrown in for good measure.

It's all terribly heterosexual. But let's face it, it's still a jungle out there whether you're straight, gay or bisexual. Change the names and the body parts and you have a universal story of love, sex and idolatry.

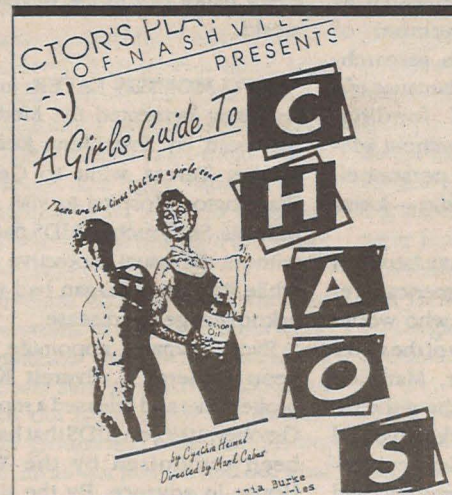
We're introduced to a trio of women—Cynthia, Cleo and Rita—all close friends who are in search of one good man in Nashville, despite the fact that they all seem to be "gay, psycho or gone." The not-so-musical questions that

"cavort in our heads" seem to be focused on "Who do you have to know around here to get laid?"

The brand of "girl talk" dished out by this trio is wonderfully decadent stuff, much racier and saucier than anything Gidget ever thought. ("If you can't fry it or fuck it, forget it!" Rita contends.) Frankly, I never realized that straight women were such size queens!

This stuff is not for the faint of heart—but girl, it's devastatingly entertaining.

That's due mostly to director Cabus' fabu
 •continued on page 12



Split personalities

DESPERATE FOR MAGIC. By Steve Chambers. Directed by Jill Jackson.
 Nashville Shakespeare Festival. Z. Alexander Looby Theatre. November 30-December 3.

reviewed by **JEFF ELLIS**
 Editor

STEVE CHAMBERS may be one of the most recognizable actors in Nashville, what with his "Steve" series of public service spots for a local TV station. For those couch potatoes who know him only from those 60-second sound bites, we have some news; it's something theatre audiences have been on to for the past few years.

Steve Chambers is a superb actor, willing to take risks in pursuit of his goals, stretching our imaginations to his creative limit as he perfects his craft. In his self-written DESPERATE FOR MAGIC, a 90-minute foray into the minds of 17 disparate, yet altogether memorable and spirited characters, Chambers delivers a performance that's astounding in its breadth and touching in its humanity. It's a risky undertaking that succeeds despite some over-long vignettes and an intermission that breaks the evening's flow.

With his ingenuous onstage demeanor and amazingly lithe body, Chambers presents his

various characters with a charming wit, infusing each with life. The result? A sometimes moving, often funny and always entertaining tour de force that is at once both comforting and frightening.

It's not perfect; far from it. Instead, DESPERATE FOR MAGIC is a kind of continuing work in progress—much like life itself, I suppose—that evolves through each of its incarnations. It's being edited not just by the playwright or director, but by the ever-changing human comedy.

In his opening monologue (which follows a somewhat confusing clown-like bit of choreography), Chambers tells us that "ever since [he] was a little boy, [he's] been fascinated by dreams, relating a particularly symbolic one involving Shirley MacLaine and his dead grandfather in evidence of that fact.

From there, it's on to Dr. Ericson Davies of "Successland," a purveyor of audio tapes with
 •continued on page 12

EIGHTYSOMETHING

Lessons learned

by JACKI MOSS
Staff Writer

Dare asked two Tennessee AIDS experts to list the most important milestones or lessons learned in the age of AIDS. Here are their responses:

MATT NELSON, education program director of the Tennessee Department of Health and Environment AIDS Program:

- "President Reagan finally saying the word 'AIDS' in public in 1987. It took entirely too long for him to acknowledge the crisis."

- "The federal anti-discrimination law passage in 1988. It took this law to legitimize the AIDS problem in many people's eyes."

- "Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's report on AIDS. This had a phenomenal impact on getting the actual facts about AIDS to the public."

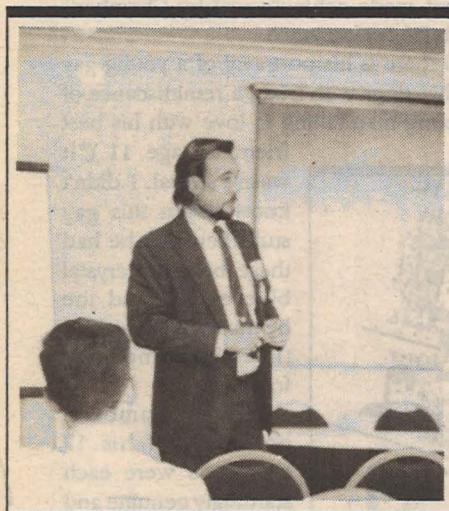
- "The apparent influence of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) on the Food

and Drug Administration to show the extreme need in speeding up the process of drug testing and making AIDS drugs available."

- "The forced recognition of the existence of the gay community by the non-gay community. Non-gay people were somewhat forced to make decisions about some issues. Many gay people were brought to the forefront of the world's attention."

- "People were forced to look at what we are teaching our children — in school, about drugs, sex and values."

- "This has focused attention to the desperate lack of anything that actually works to help people who are dependent on drugs. Treatment now mostly consists of throwing them in jail."



Matt Nelson — DARE FILE PHOTO

- "This has once again caused us to look at racism and realize that the black struggle is not the same as the white struggle."

- "Realizing that AIDS is also a women's issue helped us look at women's issues in general. Women with AIDS die quicker and the disease behaves differently in women. We are several years behind in understanding

AIDS in women."

- "AIDS has possibly shown us the pro-choice issue is not just a women's issue—that the struggle for equality and the right to choose what you do with your own bodies the same for women, blacks and gay people."

GENE COPELLO, director of the Vanderbilt AIDS Project and past president of the International Society for AIDS Education:

- "The most significant event was, of course, when the first handful of AIDS cases were described in May, 1981."

- "Then the realization in the early 1980s that AIDS was effecting all different kinds of people all over the world. Understanding that it wasn't just gay men and just Americans who had the disease was important."

- "The discovery of the human immunodeficiency virus in 1984 was a major milestone. This allowed us to begin studying ways to combat the disease and treat the symptoms."

- "Initiation of universal testing of the blood supply for HIV in 1985 was very important. Due to this testing, our blood supply is now safer than it has ever been and the risk of transmission of HIV through transfusion has been virtually eliminated."

- "When AZT was found to be effective against the virus in 1985, it had great implications. Not only was this the first known treatment that was somewhat effective, but because of the debate on whether to make it available before complete testing, the question is still debated to this day about finding and distributing new AIDS drugs."

- "The founding in 1987 of the International Society for AIDS Education marked the first international organization dedicated to the prevention of AIDS. This was the first time people from all over the world came together to talk about AIDS as a global issue. It put AIDS on the world agenda."

- "When in 1987 Ronald Reagan said 'AIDS' publicly for the first time, he was already way too late."

- "The response in the '80s by the entertainment field in helping with AIDS benefits and education helped middle America see it was okay to talk about AIDS. It helped them to somewhat accept AIDS in a way because the people they see on television were compassionate and interested in helping people with AIDS."

- "The publication of AND THE BAND PLAYED on by Randy Shilts was very important in putting the history of AIDS in perspective and making it available to everyone. It brought much attention to the epidemic."

- "The International AIDS Conference in Montreal in June of this year marked the first time a person with AIDS actually addressed an international conference on AIDS. This was very important and very moving."

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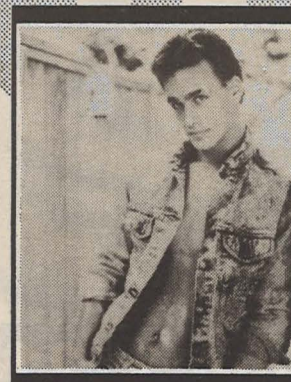
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Warehouse 28

C E N T E
Living in the

1990

by **JACKI MOSS**
Staff Writer

photographs by
BILLY HOWARD
from the book
EPITAPHS FOR THE
LIVING

imagine:
Everyone — men,
women and children — in
the cities of Chattanooga,
Knoxville, Memphis and
Nashville are stricken with the same
life threatening illness. All 1,446,598
people have to look at their own
mortality on a daily basis and be-
cause their illness is not fully under-
stood, their government, their pro-
fession, sometimes their lovers and
even some of their own family
members turn a collective back to
them.

In other times, more rational times, this analogy could be dismissed as too far-fetched to even consider, but in the age of AIDS, it is not only believable, but truthful. The truth is that more people in the United States have been infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) than the populations of Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville combined, and we have lost more Americans to AIDS than were killed in the Viet Nam conflict.

The truth is that if you filled Nashville's Vanderbilt Stadium once and then half-filled it again you would approximate the number of Americans who we know have died of AIDS.

The truth is that in the time it takes you to cook a pizza, another person dies of AIDS.

All day long. Every day.

And the truth is that AIDS has been with us for over a decade and will be with us for years to come. Much of the world noticed AIDS in October, 1985, when Rock Hudson died of what was then thought to be an obscure disease known mostly in the medical and gay/lesbian circles. But, by then, almost 12,000 Americans had already died of AIDS.

According to a report by the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control (CDC), "In June, 1981, the first cases of the illnesses now known as ac-

nodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) were reported from Los Angeles in five young men diagnosed with *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP) and other opportunistic infections..."

The first 50,000 cases of AIDS were reported to CDC from 1981 to 1987; the second 50,000 were reported between December 1987 and July 1989.

Of AIDS cases reported before 1985, 63% were homosexual/bisexual men with no history of IV-drug use; 18% were female or heterosexual male IVDUs (intravenous drug users), and 2% were sex partners or children of IVDUs or their sex partners.

AS EARLY AS 1980, odd groupings of symptoms and diseases began showing up in sufficient numbers to warrant informal discussions among the medical communities of San Francisco and New York and the CDC. Sandra Ford, a technician at the CDC, noticed unusually high requests for pentamidine (to treat what was then a somewhat rare form of pneumonia called PCP) over a short period of time and alerted her boss, James Curran who, in turn, alerted the Federal government about a new disease in the gay community.

Densely populated gay communities across the nation were encountering near-epidemic proportions of PCP, Kaposi's sarcoma and opportunistic infections like toxoplasmosis. Their physicians were talking among themselves about the unusually high rate of

these problems mostly in gay men.

The diseases seemed to be confined within the gay community until in 1982, a Miami physician reported to the CDC that he believed a hemophiliac patient of his died due to something in the Factor VII clotting factor given the patient.

Meanwhile, the collection of diseases and problems had become so prevalent, it needed a name and became known in California as Gay-Related Immune Deficiency, or GRID. It had been called the "gay disease" and "gay cancer" for a couple of years, but now there was an official term linking it to the gay community.

Posters asking people who had symptoms to come to clinics to be examined were in shop windows all over San Francisco in an effort to find out more about the disease. Gay groups and organizations began an all-out push to find out what was killing us.

Medical officials knew that the disease was not exclusive to gay men, in spite of the name, but that non-homosexuals, hemophiliacs, could get GRID as well. By the end of 1982, it was known that GRID could be transmitted sexually or through exposure to blood or its byproducts. They also knew that intravenous drug users were at risk for GRID.

Finally, later that same year, the term for the syndrome was changed from GRID to AIDS to lessen confusion and to reflect a sexually neutral disease that was not genetic in nature and that was not chemically induced.

Shortly after 1983 was ushered in, reports of AIDS in female sexual partners of males with AIDS came to light, making them and their unborn children at high risk and further evidencing that AIDS was not just a gay disease.

Even in light of information that AIDS was a potential risk for thousands of people, both gay and non-gay, the government and non-gay public gave AIDS little notice and even less funding. More and more people became ill and that, coupled with the lack of success in curing or treating AIDS, led many people to Mexico and to underground sources for desperate hope for survival. DMSO clinics in Tijuana thrived on those who couldn't.

We began to realize that not only were people dying of AIDS, but

because we did not know exactly what caused it, many other people would probably get it. There needed to be some kind of prevention and education program to stop this rollerball of death in the future.

The first government-sanctioned stab at prevention and education about AIDS came in 1983 by a Public Health Service announcement that members of high-risk groups should "be aware that multiple sexual partners increase the probability of developing AIDS." Gay groups, however, were finding out as much as possible about the transmission and risk factors associated with AIDS and began their own education and prevention efforts.

THE GAY COMMUNITY began to rally around the problem. Both gay men and lesbians came to offer whatever help possible. The first National Lesbian and Gay Leadership Conference in Dallas held a small forum on AIDS. The fledgling Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) decided to tell people what the doctors were telling them about sexual transmission. The Shanti Project in San Francisco opened the world's first AIDS clinic offering grief counseling and personal support for AIDS patients.

Later that year, the term "bodily fluids" came into the official vocabulary as something to be avoided. Even more rigorously avoided was any detailed reference by the bureaucracy to sex or specific sexual practices — thus the "just say no" AIDS prevention mentality took hold and added fuel to the fire that AIDS was a disease of depravity.

The gay community persisted in efforts to be as clear as possible about how to prevent or avoid AIDS, without the funding or support of the government. Private organizations publicly



R P I E C E

The age of AIDS

advocated avoiding exchange of any bodily fluids, the use of condoms, limiting the use of recreational drugs and enjoying more time with fewer partners.

No one knew for sure exactly what cause AIDS, but Luc Montagnier in Paris felt he was gaining ground. He continued to search, as

something

did a number of American researchers who, because of a lack of funding, worked in basements, without adequate equipment or personnel. Finally, they struck pay dirt—it was a virus.

In 1984, a major dispute between Montagnier and an American researcher erupted over who would take credit for discovery of the virus.

Another researcher, Mathilde Krim, was concerned about the future. She told New York Mayor Ed Koch that the lack of official prevention and education programs would insure an avalanche of AIDS cases in the future. She also pushed for a program of ambulatory care clinics, home care programs and a hospice. It never got off the ground.

MANY THINGS DID begin to happen. The Blood Sister Project of San Diego enlisted hundreds of lesbians to donate blood to help AIDS patients. Even many bath houses in San Francisco closed, prompting the same in other cities. The gay community continued to be the leaders in trying to do something about AIDS.

1985 had several notable events, including the fact that the military was by then routinely dismissing gay personnel who had AIDS. In San Francisco, a prostitute who carried the AIDS virus came to the attention of the public and opened the can of worms that even heterosexual men could be at risk for the disease.

Another woman, also a prostitute, gave birth to a

child who had the syndrome. This further proved that the disease did not discriminate according to gay lifestyle.

By the time the first International Conference on Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome opened in April, 1985, AIDS had spread to every major city in the developed world.

TWO MONTHS LATER, just after being presented the Medal of Freedom by President Reagan, Mother Teresa went to George Washington Hospital to visit AIDS patients. She touched AIDS patients without the usual protective garb, while President Reagan had yet to acknowledge the disease.

Even Reagan's appointee, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, broke ranks and released a report in October, 1986, on AIDS that had not been scrutinized by the White House in advance. By the time it was published, 27,000 Americans were either dead or dying of AIDS.

The report called for a war against AIDS and placed the disease in an objective context. This report called for the use of condoms and shot down the ideas of compulsory identification and quarantine endorsed by the country's AIDS-phobes. The report also served as a vehicle to place AIDS on the national agenda.

By 1987, AIDS was on the world's agenda, as well. Every continent except Antarctica reported AIDS—113 countries reported over 51,000 cases. It wasn't until the middle of 1987 that President Reagan actually publicly spoke the word "AIDS" in a speech. America had lost 20,849 people to AIDS and over 36,000 Americans had been diagnosed.

AIDS ranked seventh nationally among the estimated years of potential life lost before age 65 in 1987 and 15th among the leading causes of death in 1988. As of December 31, 1988, 1346 people with AIDS were children 13 or younger. Of this number, 78% are presumed to have acquired HIV infection perinatally from their mothers. The rest of the number is attributable to blood products with HIV.

TENNESSEE's first cases of AIDS were reported in 1982, and there are, as of October 31, 1989, 956 cases reported in the state. So far, there have been 549 verified deaths,

with 95% of those men. According to Matt Nelson, AIDS Education Coordinator at the Tennessee Department of Health and Environment (TDHE), Tennessee has made many efforts to keep on top of the epidemic, both from the governmental and private areas.

According to a recent report from the INTERGOVERNMENTAL AIDS REPORTS, the state of Tennessee spent \$308,900 in 1989 with per capita spending amounting to six cents. None of the money appropriated by the state went to community-based AIDS social service organizations. Tennessee ranks 37th in state funding (behind 35 states and the District of Columbia).

The median state-only level of funds for 1989 was approximately \$550,000 while the median amount of budgeted state funds per capita was about 33 cents.

The TDHE AIDS Program serves as a central clearinghouse of AIDS information and activities and provides services and coordination in four major areas: counseling and testing; surveillance/seroprevalence; education and social services and medically related services.

Each major TDHE service area has various components that work hand-in-hand with other government agencies, local community-based organizations and medical personnel to assist in their implementation of programs.

One very visible component of TDHE is the "Tennessee Responds to AIDS" education program. Under this program, information is generated and made available for the

public in terms of brochures, an AIDS hotline, posters, bus signs, inservices, education programs for schools, community groups, churches, industries and other organizations.

Individuals in cities throughout the state responded by forming AIDS service organizations to educate, counsel and give hands-on care for people with AIDS. These organizations were, and still are, on the frontline in the AIDS war.

Most of these groups depend largely on donations and volunteer assistance to be able to carry out their missions.

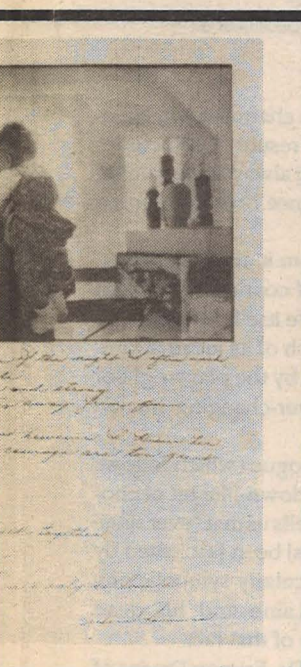
SO WHAT ABOUT the future?

Gene Copello, director of the Vanderbilt AIDS Project, said, "Hopefully, in the future we will see a federal anti-discrimination law passed to protect people with HIV infection. I believe this will happen in the next year to 18 months.

"Insofar as trends, we have found a drastic increase in AIDS in teens, both gay and heterosexual in the last couple of years. This will become a prime focus for AIDS education and prevention."

The age of AIDS has not been a pretty one, yet in extreme hardship often comes some amount of good. This dreadful time has served to coalesce the gay/lesbian community into a stronger, more compassionate and political community.

Men and women have volunteered their time, energy, money and love to help people who have HIV infection and to help prevent needless deaths in the future. •



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The presence of antibodies. Not a diagnosis.
Not sudden, insurance companies when the positive and
endorse the report.
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all of us.

1990

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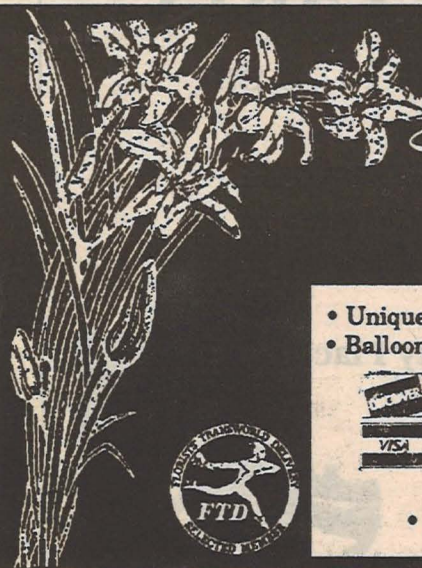
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PAGES

The living dead

THE ZOMBIE PIT. Sam D'Allesandro. Freedom, California: The Crossing Press. 1989.

reviewed by **JOE MAROHL**

Staff Writer

BEFORE HIS DEATH last year of AIDS at age 31, Sam D'Allesandro showed signs of becoming a significant writer of the New Narrative school of California men writers, like Dennis Cooper and Robert Gluck, who elevate essentially pornographic situations with psychological insight and luminescent, sinewy prose.

Half of the ten stories in this slim collection were never before published. The most mainstream D'Allesandro ever got was publication in the erotic arts journal *YELLOW SILK* and a review in *THE ADVOCATE* of his book of poems *SLIPPERY SINS* in 1984.

His story "Nobody Ever Just Disappears" appeared in the first volume of the anthology *MEN ON MEN*.

The story is typical of D'Allesandro's writing in this volume. It concerns a young man's response to the long death of an older lover into whose world the young man has willfully "disappeared." Many readers took the story to be a comment on the personal toll of AIDS on homosexual men's lives in the 1980s, an interpretation D'Allesandro himself accepted, though the older lover actually dies of a drug overdose.

The typical thing is the theme of disappearance, total inundation in a passionate relationship — an idea contrary, perhaps somewhat incomprehensible, to a society like ours that values integrity (in most of the word's sense) and equilibrium. The extreme to which the young man is willing to lose his own identity in the relationship is startling:

"When I was with him I did a lot of sliding through the environments I found myself in: slipping through the air, exploring without paying much attention to the subject, sitting as if waiting but without thought of for what. Something more than hanging out but less than participating. That's what I was doing, or not doing. That's what was happening to me."

A more explicit statement of the theme occurs elsewhere in the book:

"I move on top of him, pressing my body so close that it melds to his. A rupture opens in the long torso. I pour into it. I'm taken, somehow, inside of him — sinking in until I disappear."

Such an attitude smacks of emotional parasitism to most of us, and it's rarely treated sympathetically in our literature or film.

When it is treated with some degree of sympathy — as in Robert Altman's *THREE WOMEN*, Jean-Jacques Beineix's *BETTY BLUE* or Pedro Almodovar's *LAW OF DESIRE* — there is something eerie and chilling about it.

It is then perhaps this aspect of D'Allesandro's fiction, not its sadomasochism or grotesque characters, which gives it a distancing sense of horror for the reader.

The world in these stories is infused with bizarrely combined elements — almost like a Calvin Klein Obsession commercial as conceived by director George A. Romero.

The shock effect here is the literary equivalent of an S&M photograph by Robert Mapplethorpe, unmoralizing and coldly observant. The stories have the raw poetic verve of early Patti Smith and early, pre-Nautilus Bruce Springsteen. The imagery is perverse, even offensive sometimes.

One story meditates on the drowning death of television personality Carol Wayne. ("We loved her live now we love her dead. Here it's all the same, only better.")

In another story, a man imagines the glob in a lava lamp to be the off-spring of himself and his lover — a ridiculous idea that the writer makes take hold through sheer unironic force of will. The last story D'Allesandro was able to complete before his death was "Giovanni's Apartment."

In it, he brings together all the elements of his earlier stories. A young man with a sense of displacement since age three and a tendency to spend long uninterrupted periods indoors strikes up relationships with two different individuals: an older man who was the executioner in a snuff film the boy once saw, and an

older woman, a blonde dwarf with a job in a dime store and a mother who is dying slowly. The ménage à trois is typically portrayed as all-consuming and yet, for those involved, satisfying.

IN RECENT YEARS, the deaths of Willi Smith, Charles Ludlam, Michel Foucault and others have illustrated the extent of devastation AIDS is wreaking in the arts and culture. Admittedly, D'Allesandro's death seems a glimmer by comparison.

But it does suggest the hidden victims of the virus — the stories, poems, pictures, ideas, laughter, elegance and awe we will never have the chance to know. •

In recent years, the deaths of Willi Smith, Charles Ludlam, Michel Foucault and others have illustrated the extent of devastation AIDS is wreaking in the arts and culture.

PAGES

Bartender, do you mind...

MANHATTAN ON THE ROCKS. Michael Musto. New York: Henry Holt. 1989.

reviewed by **JOE MAROHL**

Staff Writer

AT THE END of SOCIAL DISEASE, Paul Rudnick's funny 1986 novel about New York club life, the two main characters return to the club that has been their home for years, to discover the bridge-and-tunnel crowd has infiltrated it at last.

What was once *the* avant-garde club of Downtown has diminished to the fashion status of the Food Court at a Jersey shopping mall. The couple nostalgically dance to an insipid slow tune and then disappear into the breaking dawn.

The closure is a neat twist on Alexander Pope's *THE DUNCIAD*, which ends as Dullness personified casts his numbing pall over everything and "universal darkness buries all" that is bright, beautiful and witty in the world.

In Michael Musto's *MANHATTAN ON THE ROCKS*, the spectres looming over the party scene are AIDS and the "new conservatism."

The novel concerns the rise and selling-out of one Vincent DiBlasio, an Italian asexual from Queens who starts his own gossip magazine called *MANHATTAN ON THE ROCKS*.

Even a casual thumb-through the book shows the word "AIDS" as prevalent as specks in pimento cheese. No doubt the disease is principally responsible for the fact that, as one character puts it, "funerals were the parties of the eighties."

Musto does his best to make a comedy out of the situation — and fails.

Regrettably, *MANHATTAN ON THE ROCKS* cannot sustain its lightness with these heavy issues, and never takes the sensible route to abandon farce for overt sociopolitical satire. The book seesaws stylistically between fluff and grit with a viscous Prose Whiz over it all.

When Musto tries to make a serious point, he does so too heavy-handedly, expressing a lot of anger, bitterness and frustration, which he occasionally interrupts with too well-set-up, too well-insured gags.

Perhaps, Musto is too unsure of his position to feel comfortable with being ironic about, or anything more than snidely superior to, the scene he caricatures.

Perhaps, like many of us, he is paralyzed with fear over what is really the hell going on around us. What does one do, after all, when the lights come up at Limelight and he sees he's been dancing with the Red Death?

I was prepared to like this book. Musto writes a devilish gossip column in *THE VILLAGE VOICE* and contributes frequently to other trendy magazines like *DETAILS* and *INTERVIEW*. Three years ago, he chronicled New York club life in a browsable and funny book

called *DOWNTOWN*.

This, his first novel, comes equipped with backcover raves from Sandra Bernhard, Grace Jones and Malcolm Forbes. The author knows his subject, no doubt, but the novel's failure is a failure in tone.

Musto just can't do the two things he wants to do at once — be frivolous and scream bloody murder.

To some extent, the writer is aware of the problem for himself:

"All these political causes were starting to become like a religion, piously above mockery with their high-minded sincerity.

Fuck them. I wanted to laugh my head off, dance my ass off, erase every debilitating thought with one more mindless event."

Neither DiBlasio the character nor Musto

the writer succeeds, because each is a party animal with a Catholic soul. The resulting schizophrenia leaves the reader without a reason to laugh or sufficient outrage to take positive action.

The lighter Musto tries to play it one end, his super-ego kicks in and the heavier it becomes on the other. Sometimes it's embarrassing how downright didactic he becomes:

"Emil was conspicuously doing less coke, and I wrongly assumed it was be-

cause he was weaning off it. Actually, he was doing more, just privately. After a while, I guess, it becomes a part of your system, and though you get increasingly desperate for the stuff, you're more accustomed to the desperation and are able to treat it more casually in public, though in private you're as tormented as any needy person and start doubling your doses. If that sounds confused, you can imagine what a blur it is if you're on coke."

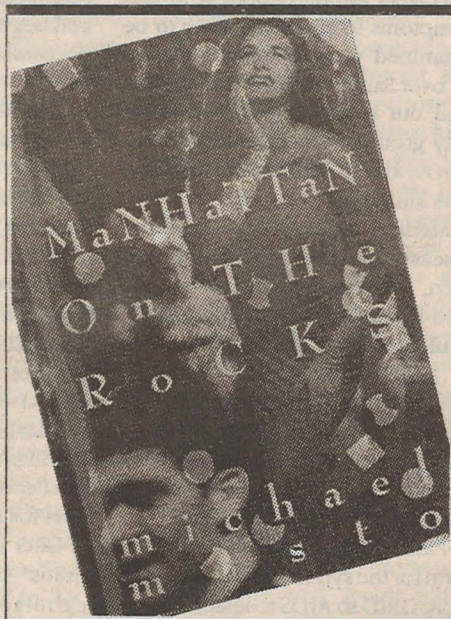
It's hard to believe a talented humorist, not a government agency, wrote these stale, moralizing lines.

The book's theme is Good v. Evil, only in the curiously provincial clothes of Downtown v. Uptown. It is a *roman à clef*, and about that end of the thing, I haven't a clue as to who is who.

Musto takes pot shots at a slew of Manhattan-based organizations (even I could figure out that *SCREAM* was really *ACT-UP*) and persons whose identities and (I bet) genders have been switched so as to give the writer free vent for lawsuit-proof rancor.

TOO BAD HIS PROJECT was self-defeating from the beginning.

How do you write a frivolous novel about the death of frivolity? Or, for that matter, a serious one? •



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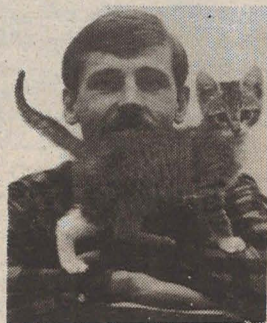
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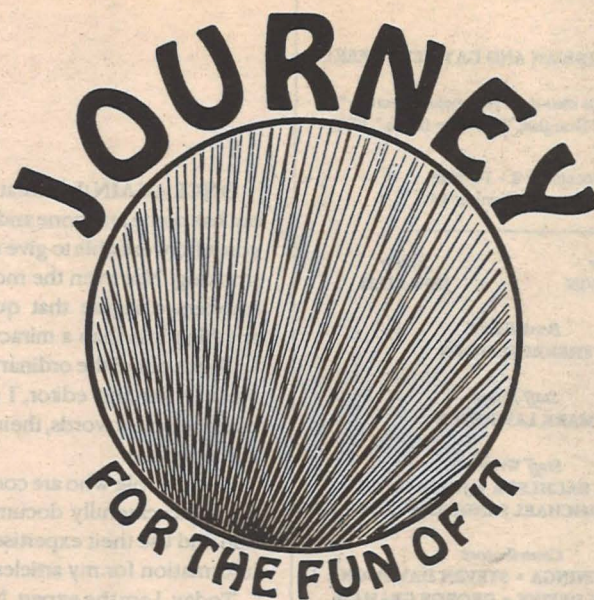
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— Lord Alfred Douglas, "The Two Loves," 1892

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ARCHIVES

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SOAPBOX

Where there's smoke...

by JACKI MOSS
Staff Writer

ONCE AGAIN the Great American Smoke-out has come and gone and I applaud those of you who were able to give up even one day of smoking. Not even the most vehement non-smokers disagree that quitting smoking is anything less than a miraculous task.

This is out of the ordinary for me. Although I'm a writer and editor, I usually work with other people's words, their thoughts, feelings and opinions.

I call people who are considered experts in the field, carefully document the conversation and use their expertise as the basis of the information for my articles.

Today, I am the expert. No, I'm no expert in the field of cancer; I don't know if the stats bear out my feelings; and I don't care.

I am an expert in knowing how losing my Mother to lung cancer made me feel and it's so painful. I can barely see my computer terminal through the tears.

So, why write such a story? Because someone needs to break through the rhetoric and make a point that touches people, one that people will believe.

Statistics are powerful, but not personal. I can tell you, first hand, what those stats mean in real terms — in terms of living day-to-day with someone you love who is dying because of smoking.

Smoking killed my Mother and although I've never smoked, it took a hell of a toll on me. No matter how old you are, when you lose a parent, you feel like an orphan.

She wanted to be at home as long as possible, so we turned our home into a hospital. I was lucky to be with her every day, all day long to care for her. Even though she was bedridden, we spent several weeks at home laughing, crying, getting angry, making plans and talking.

God, did we talk.

"Remember when we went to Fair Park and you loafer flew off while on those flying swings?" she laughed.

"Yeah, it almost gave some poor innocent bystander a concussion," I said, laughing even louder.

Then the laughter became quiet and gave way to bittersweet smiles and tear welled up in our eyes. I looked into her weak, pained eyes.

"I'd give anything to not have to leave you," she said.

"I'd give anything not to lose you," I said, and hugged her even closer.

She adored roses and wanted to make sure my yard had roses before she died. She was too weak to go without oxygen for more than a few minutes so I rolled her and her portable oxygen tank on the front porch in the mild spring breezes to oversee the planting of a Tropicana and Chicago Peace. She seemed satisfied.

She has always said there was absolutely nothing better than a Coca Cola Classic and chili dog, so I made sure she had plenty of each.

Her closest companion, her poodle, Pepper, was constantly at her side until Mom,

knowing the end was near, began weaning Pepper away from her and toward me. It was a painful experience for us all.

Easter came and we cried together and thought about the blessings we did have. She was thankful I never took up smoking and so was I.

SHE BECAME weaker and weaker. The painkillers were often not enough to control

Do you know how hard it is to hear your own Mother apologize for dying? It's the hardest thing I've ever faced. I hope you never have to hear it.

She apologized for having cancer. She said she knew it was her own fault for having the disease and swore through agony and tears that if she had realized the physical agony to her and emotional torture to me smoking would eventually cause, she would have never begun the habit.

Then came time to go to the hospital. Mother's Day came, as did more tears.

We laughed some more, got angry some more and made more plans as her body was being ravaged by the cancer.

It had spread to her other lung, bronchial tubes, kidneys, adrenal glands, liver, stomach and then made its way into her brain. This time the plans were for her cremation and how she wanted her ashes scattered in the flower beds on the farm and especially on her rose bushes we planted her last spring.

The combination of pain and medications changed things. For the first time in her life she was ready to give up on something — she was ready to give up on life.

Her spirit was ready to give up the body, but the body is a machine designed to do a job and it kept doing it. When her lungs gave up, her brain kicked in the signal to breathe and she gasped breath after breath after breath until her heart could stand no more.

YOU MAY NEVER understand this — I hope you're never in a position to have to understand this — but I welcomed my own Mom's death.

She was relieved, and so was I. Not because she was a burden, but because lung cancer is a cruel, cruel disease that causes suffering beyond belief. I wanted my Mom to have relief from her agony and death then became welcome to us both.

Now, as I see so many of us caring for people with AIDS and tending to the daily tasks of living, I wonder what the future holds for those who smoke and their loved ones. Please. If you can't stop smoking for yourself, do it for those who love you. •

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No matter how old
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feel like an orphan.

the physical pain and nothing was enough to diminish the emotional pain. It seemed that only talking and holding her helped.

When her pain became too intense, she always asked me to leave the room because she didn't want me to see her hurt that much.



— DARE CARTOON BY LESLIE GUERIN-HAINES

GAY BRIEFS

Honk if you masturbate

by **JIM ROCHE**
Contributing Writer

WHEN I WAS A closeted high school student in the '60s, I remember we boasted about the four Fs: Find 'em. Feel 'em. Fuck 'em. Forget 'em.

A sexist, macho attitude I'm still ashamed of. If you wanted to be a "man" you had to show you were only interested in one thing, having sex with a girl.

Not love. Not relationships. Sex. It was what proved you were a real guy. If you didn't do it, you at least had to talk about it.

Masturbation, foreplay, sex for pleasure that didn't have as its aim intercourse, didn't do anything for your image.

Who ever discussed any other kind of sex than intercourse when they were a teenager? Did you ever say that somebody beat you off great? You wouldn't dare!

People who masturbated were weird. Faggots. Queers. It was a standard joke to say somebody "played with themselves."

You would never admit that you masturbated. And today most sexual alternatives that don't have as their goal intercourse still are considered less than normal, "queer." In a recent report from the federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta we read that the number of reported AIDS cases in teenagers in the past two years has increased by 40%. Not only are teens being infected, but they are being infected at an alarming rate.

In New York, state health officials say that one in 1,000 babies born to 15-year-olds test positive for HIV. One in 100 born to 19-year-olds test positive. Of course this means their teenage mothers are infected.

Other recent studies have brought to light the alarming rate of HIV infection on college campuses as well.

And finally, just to help you project this into the future a bit, the Center for Population Options reports that each year one in six teenagers contracts a sexually transmitted disease. One is six! And these sexually active teens have an average of at least four different partners.

The AIDS crisis hasn't bottomed out, and it isn't over yet. It's going to get worse as it spreads among teenagers, resources will become harder to find and the problem is people won't become aware until it's too late.

These days it seems that sex isn't something people want to talk about, especially when it come to talking to their children. The only talking teens are getting about sex is still the four Fs.

All people know right now is that sexually transmitted diseases are spreading like wild-fire. Of course, it's not their children or teens. The only thing that isn't spreading is sexual knowledge.

What do we do? In response to the AIDS crisis, Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston has

urged Catholic parents to pull their kids out of AIDS and sex education classes because condoms are mentioned. He said the school district's course on sexuality discussed sex and condoms in an "amoral" way. A combination of one part abstinence and two parts ignorance is what he offers.

If we as a society continue to be afraid of discussing our own sexuality, we are about to have a rude awakening. People like Cardinal Law of Boston and Cardinal O'Connor of New York want students to think like we did 20 years ago, that nice people don't have sex, don't masturbate, don't do anything unsaintly or unmanly, and don't talk about it.

Homosexuals, queers and perverts do these things.

Political ultra-conservatives, the Church, pro-lifers and the courts in various states seem to want you to think that there is only one way to have sex (heterosexual vaginal

intercourse, if you're married and want to have children) and the end result is that people think every other kind of sexuality and sensuality is sick, forbidden, less than normal, queer.

They say they want to protect our kids from the perversions of the sexual revolution that "went haywire."

But really, unless we start to teach our children, and ourselves, that there are other ways to experience sensuality and sexuality, we may be heading for a real nightmare none of us can fix.

It's true what they say, there's more to sex than intercourse.

Sure, we want to teach young people that they need to love and work on relationships. That's fine, but more importantly, if we are going to save our children from sexually transmitted diseases, we need to teach them that there's more to sex than intercourse by talking about what else there is, like masturbating alone or with your friends; that there are roles and games, there are books to read, movies to watch, toys to buy and usually more places to explore on and in their own bodies that the local travel agency can offer for this weekend.

WE NEED TO TAKE more erotic trips than exotic ones. We need to teach them that condoms can protect you, but you don't always need them because there are lots of safe things to do without them.

Sexual possibilities include, yes, abstinence, and condoms, and a whole bunch of other things that are fun, exciting and good for you. Things they never thought of (and hopefully, things I still haven't thought of.)

We have to stop backing down and being prudes.

We have to remember to keep the sex in sexual revolution. It's time to talk. •

*If we continue
to be afraid of
discussing our
own sexuality, we
will have a rude
awakening.*

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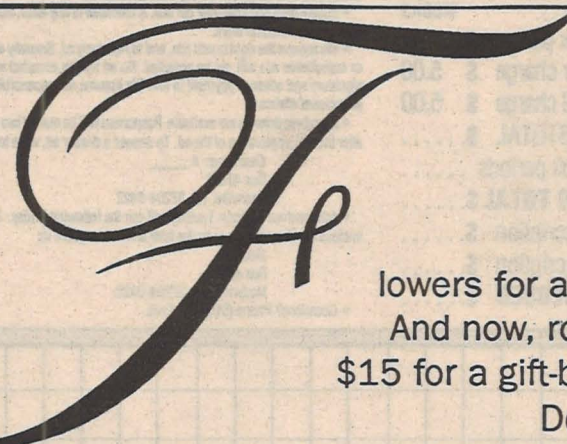


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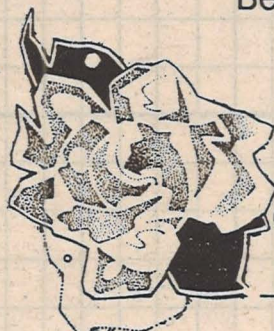
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 - LL - I'm remembering how wonderful last Christmas was and how sorry I am we're not tree-shopping together this year. Remember that scrawny cedar we bought? Let's give it another try, huh? Your mom won't give me your number, so please call. I was wrong and I'm really sorry. - Bear

LOOSE LIPS

Anita vacation, don't you?

"Two guys, one cart, fresh pasta. Figure it out."
— **DESIGNING WOMEN's** Suzanne Sugarbaker, on spotting gay couples at the grocery, during a recent episode.

"We think lesbians and gay men should be able to legally marry. In our view, it's a matter of civil rights. Not to mention simple fairness and good sense."
— **Stevie Bryant and Demian**, publishers/editors of **PARTNERS: THE NEWSLETTER FOR GAY AND LESBIAN COUPLES**, in a letter to syndicated advice columnist Ann Landers, who asked for readers' opinions on same-sex marriages.

"Loved your October cover, 'The Rehnquist Court Sets Sail.' Now if their boat would only sink..."
— **Dare** staff writer, and law student, Laura Tek, quoted in the "Letters" section of the **American Bar Association JOURNAL's** December issue.

"Nixon was not a crook; Hampton is not a bigot, and I'm not queer."
— **William Waybourn**, president of the **Dallas Gay Alliance**, quoted in **Boston's GAY COMMUNITY NEWS**. Waybourn was referring to recently-censured Judge Jack Hampton, whose homophobic remarks have placed him at the center of a year-long controversy.

"I feel like Anita Bryant in 1957."
— **Country music diva K. T. Oslin**, during a recent Nashville concert. Little did Oslin know that Bryant was in the audience. Anti-gay bigot Bryant, who during the '70s led a much-publicized attack on lesbians and gay men, is now making her home in Nashville, according to **THE TENNESSEAN**. Sigh. There goes the neighborhood.

"If gays are granted rights, next we'll have to give rights to prostitutes and to people who sleep with St. Bernards and to nailbiters."
— **Anita Bryant**.

"Anita, you are to Christianity what paint-by-numbers is to art!"
— **Lesbian comic Robin Tyler**.

"There was one point where our daughters, Gloria and Barbara, told me that they didn't want to hold hands with their little girlfriends anymore. They were afraid people would think they were homosexuals."
— **Anita Bryant**, a runner-up to Miss America — years ago. No comment from La Bryant over those old photographs of her and Miss Vermont holding hands on the boardwalk in Atlantic City.

"I can't imagine teachers having any influence on whether students become homosexual or heterosexual. Anita Bryant's ideas about homosexual teachers recruiting young boys is nonsense. It goes against all the facts we have."
— **Sex researcher Wardell Pomeroy**.

"As to Anita's fear that she'll be assassinated? The only people who might shoot

Anita Bryant are music lovers."
— **Novelist Gore Vidal**.



Anita Bryant!: Miss Begotten? — DARE FILE PHOTO

"Dan White may have pulled the trigger, but Anita Bryant and John Briggs loaded the gun."
— **Entertainer Robin Tyler**, commenting on homophobia and the assassination of Harvey Milk.

"Why do you think homosexuals are called fruits? It's because they eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of life...which is male sperm...There is even a Jockey short called Forbidden Fruit. Very subtle. Did you know that?"
— **Anita Bryant**, on a particularly lucid day.

"Anita Bryant like Anita hole in the head."
— **Graffiti from the Bryant era**.

"The only thing I want to know is whether a person is kind or unkind."
— **Actress Butterfly McQueen**, when asked her opinion of the lesbian/gay rights movement. McQueen is one of the few surviving stars of the 1939 David O. Selznick production of **GONE WITH THE WIND**, currently celebrating its 50th anniversary. Sorry, Anita.

"If one were looking for an analogy for the danger Van Susteren's 'irresponsible' AIDS patient poses to society, it would not be the danger that a 'gun-toting psychotic' poses; instead, it would be something rather like the danger a careless skydiver poses. Clearly, if a sensible person wished to engage in skydiving, he would not want such an unreliable individual to pack his parachute. Indeed, any self-respecting sky diver would want only someone whom he knew well and who had merited his trust to pack his parachute. Sex, especially, between males, is a similarly dangerous sport."
— From "Psychiatry in the Age of AIDS" by Thomas Szasz in December's **REASON** magazine.

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