Les/gay community applauds first black leader of major party

by STUART BIVIN
Editor

The selection of Washington, D.C., lawyer and political activist Ron Brown as Democratic National Committee chair “bodes well for the lesbian, gay and AIDS activist community,” according to Robert Bray, Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) director of communications. HRCF is the country’s largest national lesbian/gay rights political action committee.

Brown, the first black person ever to head a major American political party, was elected unanimously last week by state Democratic party chiefs. He served as campaign manager for Jesse Jackson’s 1988 Presidential bid.

“Brown is a card-carrying liberal, so this is a signal to those who are concerned that there might have been a backlash in the Democratic party against liberals. There has been some concern that the Democratic leadership might try to move the party to the right in light of the Dukakis loss — to try to become more Republican. We view this as a sign that that won’t happen,” Bray told Dare by phone Friday.

Bray praised Brown’s political acumen and commitment to issues important to the lesbian and gay community.

“Brown is politically astute. He’s a shrewd tactician,” Bray said, adding that he did not believe Brown will abandon the party’s liberal constituencies in order to satisfy conservative southern party leaders.

“He has a record of being sensitive to the Democratic party’s traditional bases: women, blacks, workers, lesbians and gay men,” Bray said, “I guess anything’s possible, so there’s always that danger, but now is now, and he’s pretty much the classic liberal now.”

former sheriff raped

Henderson County inmates

by JEFF ELLIS
Managing Editor

LEXINGTON, Tenn. — Henderson County typifies the quiet Southern counties that dot the western Tennessee landscape.

The 22,500 residents of the county, just west of the Tennessee River, are a proud lot, described by local Chamber of Commerce officials as “hard-working farmers” and light industry workers.

Thus, when charges were first leveled at then-Sheriff Jack Fowler, people scoffed at the notion that the lawman had forcibly had sex with male inmates in the county jail. But evidence indicates that Fowler may have been subjecting prisoners to sexual harassment and battery as early as 1977.

Now serving a ten-year sentence in federal prison for violating prisoners’ civil rights, former sheriff Fowler was indicted on state charges last Friday on 15 counts of raping and sodomizing prisoners in his jail.

Fowler’s indictment last Friday culminated a four-and-a-half year struggle by victims of his abuse to have state charges filed against the former sheriff. He was charged with aggravated rape, which carries with it a possible sentence of 20 years to life imprisonment.

The case against Fowler was presented to the Henderson County Grand Jury by special prosecutor, District Attorney Kenneth Atkins of Dickson County’s 33rd Judicial District. Atkins was appointed to the case after Henderson County D.A. Jerry Woodall was accused of feet-dragging in bringing the case to the grand jury.

Woodall, who Monday refused to comment on the case, presented findings in the Fowler case to the grand jury last October. Rumors of Fowler’s misconduct were first brought to Woodall’s attention in 1982, according to one legal source.

However, Woodall admitted he was reluctant to bring the case to the grand jury because Fowler’s popularity would have made it nearly impossible to get an indictment.

Fowler became the subject of an investigation by federal authorities in 1986, which eventually led to an indictment on federal charges that he had violated the civil rights of nine prisoners. He is serving a ten-year sentence for those charges.

Because rape is punishable under state, not federal, law, Fowler was charged by the Federal grand jury with civil rights violations. Since his conviction, Fowler’s victims have continued their struggle to have him indicted on state charges.

The former sheriff was charged with aggravated rape.
MEMPHIS

Special Events

Saturday, February 18
Seminar Loving Yourself Unconditionally. Susan Taranto. Sponsored by Gay Women's Social Group, Memphis. 7:30pm. $2 donation. Info 901-326-6949.

Sunday, February 19

Monday, February 20
PRESIDENTS' DAY

Monday, February 20
MTSU Lambda Association Meeting to reorganize for new semester. For lesbian and gay Middle Tennessee State University students, faculty, staff, and alumni. MTSU Keathley University Ctr, Mutfreesboro. 7pm. Info 615-800-3787.

Wednesday, February 22
WASHINGTON’S BIRTHDAY

NASHVILLE

Mon, Tuesdays
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous). Open meeting, Memorial Lambda Center. 5:30pm and 8pm, Info 615-272-9468.

Wed, Thursdays
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous). Open meeting, Memorial Lambda Center. 5:30 and 8pm, Info 615-272-9468.

NIGHT

THE ULTIMATE IN SITTING & SLEEPING COMFORT

BY DAY OR NIGHT.

OPEN MONDAY THRU SATURDAY TEN TO SIX & SUNDAY ONE TO FOUR.

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...sheriff charged with rape

continued from page 1

vated rape, sodomy and crimes against na-

ture.

Friday's action by the grand jury followed
the indictment of Fowler's chief deputy Bobby
Ayres on charges he was an accessory after
the fact to aggravated rape and crimes against
nature. If Ayers is found guilty, he could face
a maximum sentence of five years in prison.

Fowler's sentence cannot exceed Fowler's sen-
tence if he is convicted.

Fowler, who first won election in 1976, al-

legedly began sexually assaul-
ting inmates in 1977. Henderson
County resident Sam Moffitt
told reporters that he had
first made for-
tal complaints against
Fowler in 1982, but Woodall refused to bring
the issue before the grand jury.

During the summer of 1986, flyers began to
circulate throughout the county calling for
Fowler's impeachment and removal from
office. The flyers said that Fowler was homosex-
ual and that he raped and abused jail inmates.

On August 6, 1986, the day before Fowler
was re-elected in an uncontested election, he
had Sam Moffitt and his brother, Johnny, ar-
rested on charges of criminal libel for distribut-
ing the flyers calling for his impeachment.

Moffitt brothers were dismissed in February,
1988, after Fowler pleaded guilty in federal
court to violating nine inmates' civil rights.

Despite the charges leveled at the former
sheriff, Henderson County appears to still
support him. Sources in Lexington privately
indicated that the local opinion is "that our
good old boy sheriff wouldn't do anything like
that."

When Fowler was first arraigned on federal
charges, locals filled the courthouse to see for
themselves if the popular political figure
would ir.

be charged.

Authorities refuse to say
where Fowler is
incarcer-
ated. Accord-
ing to current
Henderson
County Sheriff
Bobby Butler, Fowler has
been moved time and again from one prison t o
another to protect him from other inmates who
resent him for being a former law officer.

According to Jackson Sun reporter Lesley
Trischlcr, Fowler is believed to be in a federal
prison in Oklahoma pending his transfer to
Tennessee to stand trial on the sodomy, aggra-
vated rape and crimes against nature charges.

"But even D.A. Woodall isn't sure he's being
held there. He told me he hadn't even thought
of checking on Fowler until I asked him where
he is in prison," Trischler told Dare.

Butler further noted that Fowler has been
threatened by other inmates because he is a
homosexual.

B R I E F S

from STAFF REPORTS

Court: CIA can't ban all homosexuals

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY's (CIA) blanket policy denying security clear-
ances to all persons who are found to have committed "homosexual acts," is wrong.

The 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals made that ruling in late January in the case of Julie Dobbs,
a lesbian scientist employed by a Silicone Valley defense contractor. The CIA had denied Dobbs
access to classified information necessary to her continued employment in 1981, citing her "pattern of
homosexual activity," and adding that granting her a security clearance would not be
consistent with the interests of national security.

The court's decision reversed an earlier district court ruling upholding the discriminatory
procedures. A CIA appeal of the Circuit Court ruling is expected.

New rule impedes anti-gay legislators

A RULES CHANGE SPONSORED by openly gay Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), accepted by
the U.S. House of Representatives as part of a Democratic package of related bills earlier this
month, may in the future quell surprise anti-gay/lesbian actions by members of Congress.

The rules change would adapt existing House rules to allow members to postpone votes on
"motions to instruct" joint committee conferences on a Senate amendment for 24 hours and would
mandate that floor debate time be divided equally so that opposition to the motion could be
voiced.

Although the rules change would seem technical to those unfamiliar with the intricate
workings of the Congress, such a change could mean the life or death of a host of anti-gay/lesbian
actions as those faced by the 100th Congress in 1988.

The previously obscure "motions to instruct" gained notoriety in October, 1987, when Rep.
William Dannemeyer (R-Calif.) used the then little-known procedure to instruct members of the
House conferring with the Senate on the federal AIDS budget.

Dannemeyer attempted to promote a Senate-approved amendment banning the federal
funding of AIDS agencies which produced materials that "promote homosexuality."

Frank's change, approved on the first day of the 101st Congress by a party line 231-162 vote,
will now buy time for lobbyists and House members by demanding that debate be equally split
between speakers for and against the motion and allow a 24-hour postponement of a final
vote.

...sherriff charged with rape

--- end ---
I started to shake and I realized how scared I was. I knew then I had a problem...

SEXUAL ADDICTION
Is it real?
itch while at work, often masturbating in the wash room and then taking a long lunch to visit a peep show. "Usually, I'd have sex with some guy and then go back to work," he says.

By the time of that fateful trip to Atlanta in 1987, Rob was demonstrating almost textbook examples of addiction. Authorities say that sex addicts often:

* Live a secret sexual life steeped in lies and shame.
* Find it nearly impossible to control urges.
* Pursue sexual interests obsessively despite personal and financial risks.

Rob now credits his support group and his therapist with "changing his life."

“My therapist probably saved my life, actually. And the group gave me the strength and the courage to carry on on a day-to-day basis," he says.

And for almost a year now, Rob has been sexually sober, which for him has meant being celibate. 

But there are no easy answers for a sex addict, just as there are no easy answers for someone addicted to drugs or alcohol. According to the National Association on Sexual Addiction Problems, "sexual addiction is obsessive/compulsive sexual behavior which, if left untreated, will cause severe distress and despair for both the individual and the family."

"The sexual addict is unable to control his or her sexual behavior and lives with constant pain, alienation and fear of discovery."

NASAP says that the best indicator that a sexual addiction problem exists is the history of negative consequences due to sexually compulsive behavior.

"These consequences may be financial, social, emotional, physical and/or legal in nature," according to NASAP. •

Are you addicted to sex?

Sexual desire is not an automatic indicator of sexual addiction. Neither is masturbation on a regular basis. But if you're afraid that you may be addicted to sex, the National Association on Sexual Addiction Problems offers these questions:

1. Do you sense that your sexual thoughts and behaviors are causing problems in your life?
2. Have your sexual thoughts and behaviors interfered with your ability to function at home, school or work?
3. Do you have poor control or responsibility due to your sexual behavior or thoughts?
4. Do you struggle to control or stop your sexual thoughts and behaviors only to find that you fail time and again?
5. Do you spend more money than you can afford on sexual activities or on sexually-explicit materials?
6. Do you feel guilty or shameful after engaging in sexual activity or sexual fantasy?
7. Do you risk danger by not taking reasonable precautions or by going to unsafe places in order to have sex?
8. Does your pursuit of sexual activity become more compulsive and ritualized?
9. Do you resort to sex to escape, relieve anxiety, or just to cope with problems?

While a few experts reject the concept of sexual addiction, most agree that if you answer "yes" to at least one of these questions, a sexual addiction problem may exist. •

Vanderbilt University
Students for Women's Concerns present

Minnie Bruce Pratt
POET, ESSAYIST, FEMINIST, TEACHER

BOOKS IN THE CLOSET, BOOKS IN THE ATTIC: A Lesbian Writer Talks About Racism, Homophobia, and Class Issues in the South
A lecture with reception following.
Thursday, February 23, 7 p.m.
Vanderbilt Furman Hall Room 114, Nashville

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If you haven't signed up yet, see a Chute employee for an application
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February 19 Ribeye, $4.50
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Tuesdays
Dance Floor Opens at 8pm
Rachel Siurra's Modern Music
Draft Beer and Cooler Blast
$3.50
6pm - Midnight

Thursday, February 23
Male Dancer Contest
Hosted by
Summer Holiday & Lance
$100* Cash Prize

On the River
WHEN A MAJOR mainstream magazine like Southern Living magazine devotes a feature article to gay life in the South ("From Birmingham-Straight Talk About Being Gay," February 1989) it would seem to signal a thawing of the icy moralist landscape most gay people accept as a perfect part of living in the Bible Belt. Sandwiched between articles on the South's "ivy league" colleges and a portrait of environmentalists efforts to reclaim polluted portions of the Mississippi River, the magazine incorporates a profile of Birmingham's gay community into its pages as easily and with as little fanfare as they would include an article about the Daughters of the Confederacy.

Yet the very ease with which Billy Cox and his circle of friends fit between the pages of Southern Living is in fact the very heart of the problem while their March Gras celebrations may be a bit more flamboyant than the one held at the Birmingham country club, and while their sense of fashion is probably always a step ahead of the Joneses, the men who form what is called in the article the "South's gay elite" are in no material or political way (and for most of us these are the same thing) any different than their heterosexual counterparts in the Southern "establishment." No more threatening in their lifestyles than the little old lady next door. But why aren't the Joneses afraid of these men? Surely these gay men take the ass (and reform of course) the same as any other gay man; they are "unconvicted felons" like the rest of us.

IN MANY RESPECTS, the gay men in Southern Living's article are living the life many of us—activists included—dream about: they are professionally successful and financially secure; they live in neighborhoods they have "gentrified" with other successful, queer people; they are influential in community groups, churches, and a wide assortment of civic causes. They do not experience the threat of job loss, harassment, or discrimination many consider now to be the inevitable consequence of being gay or lesbian in the South.

The problem with the dream these men are living is that it is a dream born of repression and homophobia. No one in the civic groups, churches, or businesses knows these men are gay—making their dream a dream that hasn't been paid for, their privileged lives lived with silver lies. And sadly, the "gay elite" of Birmingham are found in many other Southern cities, and Northern cities too. They can certainly be found in Tennessee. They are alternately described as Southern as "powerful," "an integrated part of the Southern elite," a "mirror image of the region's traditional, old-line, upper-middle-class heterosexual establishment" in short, no more queer than a common dollar bill. "So long as you don't have a strip show at your party that might offend your straight friends, your sexual preference is your own business," says Billy Cox, the only member of the Birmingham elite who lets himself be named. Tailoring parties to the comfort level of Birmingham straight is only the beginning of the self-mutilation of identity practiced by these gay men in order to keep their own house, their six-figure incomes, and the dubious comfort of feeling accepted by the old-line establishment.

BUT THE MEN in the Brooks Brothers suits are not the only ones who pay for their "dream" coming true. Every self-respecting queer in Birmingham and elsewhere pays for the gay elite dream every time they are told they can be accepted as long as they do not "act too flamboyant," "too effeminate," too uncomfortably queer; so long as they never tell their families, their families' friends, their colleagues, that they are gay. So long as they look straight, act straight, and speak straight, they too can live the dream as though it were real.

Needless to say, there are no lesbians in the "gay elite" portrayed in Southern's pages, because no matter how hard they might try, lesbians cannot mirror the South's white heterosexual male establishment. There are no middle-class gay men in the article, no one poor, jobless, no one with AIDS, no one suffering because they are queer. Because no one in the South's gay elite is queer. Their insular lives separate them only marginally from the straight world, but inscrutably from the queer world. IF THEY CONTINUE to do what is expected of them, they may never experience harassment, discrimination, loss of family, children, or income. But they also will never experience the security of genuine community, self-acceptance, self-reliance: they will always rely on the straight world to tell them who to be, what to do, and how to do it. The dream they have is a sham; the lives they lead as pitiable as they are pretentious. "Straight Talk About Being Gay" is just that: straight talk. Save your two bucks for a subscription to Dare.

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1989 Miss Gay Tennessee USA Pageant
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Diana Hutton Emcee
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Applications at the bar, or call (615) 385-9689

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- **GWY, healthy, prof., intelligent, 27, seeks others for friendship, companionship or more.** Send phone, note. All serious replies answered. DARE DRAWER 33.

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- **Browse XL, 32, ave looks, HIV neg, looking for female to have a child.** Tom, P.O. Box 4012, Huntsville, AL 35815

**Homes**

- **Male roommate wanted to share 2 bdrm twnh in west Nashville. $225/mo + half util. Nonsmoker.** 615-293-9461.

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**Pages**

**The Temple**

The Temple by Stephen Spender. New York: Grove Press, 1988. $15.95. reviewed by Chris Freeman special to Dare

**In a recent article** about his new book The Company We Keep, literary critic Wayne Booth discussed his early views of D.H. Lawrence. Booth said that, early in his career, he was asked to deliver a paper on Lawrence, but he decided to decline because he found Lawrence too "preaching." Lawrence, Booth and many others think, speaks too often and too obviously through his characters. After re-reading Lawrence, however, Booth was able to enjoy the controversial British writer in spite of his "faults." Stephen Spender, another "controversial" British writer, can be perceived to be too forceful in using his characters in The Temple as mouthpieces for himself. But, in spite of this "fault," he has written an interesting story with a fascinating history.

In the introduction, Spender explains that he wrote a manuscript of the novel in 1929. In 1962, he sold it to the University of Texas, and he forgot about it. A friend of Spender's discovered the manuscript in Austin in 1985, so Spender re-read, revised and finished the novel in 1987.

An autobiographical novel set in England and Germany, The Temple is the story of Spender, Christopher Isherwood, W.H. Auden and Herbert List Paul, the main character (and Spender in the text) is a developing writer who leaves oppressive England for the (sexually) liberated Germany.

The Temple is, in many ways, a curious novel. Spender's style emphasizes the aesthetics of English and German culture and the captivating beauty of bodies. From the utilizing List photograph on the cover to the descriptions of the swimmers at German baths, Spender worships the naked body the way his characters worship the sun.

**SPENDER'S POEM** "1929," a poem that Paul is writing in the novel, is the epilogue for The Temple. The poem ends:

"I see, risen a moment, joined or separate, Fall heavily, then are ever separate, Sod lifted, turned, slapped back again with spade.

In The Temple, the lives of these characters are somehow both joined and separate. And, after the novel ends, with their lives well into the 1930s, their separateness is all that is left.

Yes, Spender is sometimes overzealous in his polemizing, but the overall effect of the novel is not subverted by this "flaw." Spender succeeds in simultaneously praising and lamenting this microcosmic view of the transitions in Europe from 1929 to 1932, transitions that would affect all of the world. The liberated Germany so loved and sought after by Spender and his contemporaries is gone forever after 1932, and, in The Temple, Spender suggests that as goes Germany, so goes the rest of the world.**

**BRIEFS**

From staff reports

**Iowa asks about sexual orientation**

Iowa Gay and Lesbian Organizations and civil libertarians have asked that the state discontinue its policy of questioning applicants for jobs as law enforcement officers about their sexual orientation.

The longstanding practice had not been previously reported until recently when an Iowa lesbian applying for a state trooper position was asked about her sexual orientation.

“She saw her choices as either giving a dishonest answer and getting trapped by the polygraph test or giving a honest answer and having that be the end of the employment process. So she lied,”

said John Schmacker of the Gay Coalition of Des Moines.

Sam Knowles, spokesperson for the Iowa Department of Public Safety, said that the agency had been asking applicants for troopers, fire marshals and other positions that question for years, because “our people are expected to set an example in the community and we look at a lot of things.”

Blaine Goff, chief of the Iowa State Patrol, defended the practice and said the patrol asks the questions to avoid hiring an employee who might be susceptible to blackmail.

The questions are legal under Iowa law, according to the state attorney general’s office, but Schmacker said the actual intent of the state’s policy is “to avoid having gay and lesbian people” as employees.**