Nashville Pride Week parade route changed, plans made

by HARRISON HICKS
Contributing Writer

Responding to the results of a survey taken after last year’s successful Pride Week celebration, Nashville Lesbian and Gay Pride Week Committee organizers are completing plans to increase visibility for the annual Pride Parade Saturday, June 24 by changing its route and length.

This year’s parade, instead of starting at Fannie Mae Dees Park and ending at Centennial Park, will start at Centennial Park with a march of 1.2 miles before returning to Centennial Park, according to Penny Campbell, a member of the committee.

“We thought that it might be easier to begin and end in the same place,” she said, citing problems last year for the more than 200 parade participants who had to park at one location, march to another, and then find a way to retrieve their cars later.

Campbell said surveys returned to the committee also showed a desire for more visibility for the march, which last year wound through side streets until the crossing of West End Avenue to the main entrance of Centennial Park.

Accordingly, Campbell said that parade organizers this year plan for the march to proceed east on Elliston Place to 21st Avenue, then back over to West End before concluding at Centennial Park, a route three-tenths mile longer than last year’s.

The parade will also start later in the day, at 3 p.m., Campbell said, a move designed to place most of the day’s activities in the cooler late-afternoon and early evening hours. Last year, marchers had to brave 103-degree heat for the mid-day parade.

While plans for the rally are still being finished, Campbell said that several guest speakers and entertainers are being lined up for the event. Keynote speaker will be Metropolitan Community Church/Detroit minister Renee McCoy, the executive director of the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays. The day’s activities are scheduled to be capped off by an evening of entertainment, headlined by a concert by singer Deidre McCalla.

Several other events have been confirmed for Pride Week. The week’s activities will continue on page 3.

Getting personal on paper

by JEFF ELLIS
Managing Editor

"Earth-mother LWF, wondering where all those fabulous women are in the South, seeks intelligent, warm, caring soulmate.

"GWM, late 20s, seeks sun-loving, spirited guy for fun, friendship and more.

"Bl-couple seeks adventurous male or female for limitless good times. Must be drug and alcohol-free."

More than once you’ve probably found yourself scanning the back pages of the Advocate or some other nationally-distributed publication, looking for the one advertisement that will catch your fancy. You may have even turned to Dare’s back page to read the ads of local interest.

Chances are you tell yourself you’re looking simply for amusement. You certainly would never consider answering one.

Or would you?

For many people, however, personal ads may be a viable means of meeting new friends. Or possibly new lovers.

The advertisements, which now appear in publications ranging from the local newspaper to the New Yorker, provide an arena for people who want to meet new people to do so.

The Village Voice, the Greenwich Village-based weekly newspaper, is considered by many to have been the impetus for the current nationwide personals proliferation.

Scanning the personals in any publication will show an abundance of individuals looking for love—or a reasonable facsimile—through a brief descriptive ad. It’s easy, it’s relatively safe and it’s anonymous until the right time comes.

“In a town like this, it seems like everyone has the same circle of friends. And it’s very difficult to meet new people,” said Randy, a Nashville man who has placed personal ads before—and answered a few, too.

In fact, Randy answered one such ad in the Advocate a couple of months ago. The ad, placed by a man who had just been discharged from the Army, indicated a desire to form a friendship or relationship, and to possibly relocate.

After an exchange of four or five letters and a couple of phone calls, Randy invited the man to Nashville for a visit.

“In his letters, and in our conversations, he seemed really nice. And I wanted to meet him,” Randy said.

From his home on the Mississippi gulf coast, the man traveled by train to Birmingham, where Randy met him. The two drove back to Nashville to spend the weekend.

“I wanted to make things easier for him. He had just gotten out of the Army recently and money was kind of tight, so I volunteered to meet him in Birmingham,” he said.

Almost as soon as the two started their trip back to Tennessee, Randy grew uneasy.

“He seemed really stand-offish. He was never affectionate in any way,” Randy said. But Randy assumed his pen pal was just feeling a little bashful. After all, he supposed, how would he have felt meeting a virtual stranger at a train station and driving 200 miles with him?

During the weekend, Randy’s houseguest remained aloof, declining invitations to meet other people or to go out.

“He said he was uncomfortable around other people, that he didn’t go out much. He said he was quiet and reserved. I could understand that, I don’t go out to bars much myself,” Randy said. “He was very friendly, but wouldn’t allow any physical contact.”

*continued on page 3
Turnabout's fair play.
Advance would like to say a big "Thank you" to the staff, management, guest performers and customers of the Jungle Lounge for their "Turnabout" fundraiser last Tuesday, April 18. For more information about Advance, please call (615) 385-4283.

Mercy buckets, we're aglow with Pride.
The Nashville Pride Week Committee thanks Steve Smith and Warehouse 28 for the "Aglow with Pride" kickoff fundraiser. The seed money from this event will help bring Renee McCoy, executive director of the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, and Deidre McCalla, Olivia recording artist, to Nashville in June, among other things. Join us for our next meeting, Sunday, April 30, at 1 p.m. and our fundraiser at Ralph's on Saturday, May 6. Phone (615) 297-4293 for more information.

Nashville Pride Week '89

Myth #3: Chiropractic adjustments hurt
A lot of people are afraid that a chiropractor will hurt them during an adjustment. The truth is that Dr. Deborah Kowalski uses gentle techniques to bring your spine into its proper alignment. Chiropractic takes pressure off your nerves and allows your organs, bones, muscles and nerves to work as they were meant to. Back pain hurts. Chiropractic relieves the pain.

Complimentary consultation. Insurance accepted. Dr. Deborah Kowalski • Chiropractic Physician • 108 Harding Place, Nashville • (615) 352-1234

Bedded out lately?
Beginning in Victorian times, it became fashionable to plant colorful tropical plants every spring. But those were the days when everyone had three gardeners. We specialize in perennials. They come back every year. They get bigger every year. Your maintenance diminishes every year.

At Botanica, we can turn your one-year stands into lifetime commitments.

- André Viette perennials
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MEMPHIS

Mondays
Gay Awareness Bear Radio Show: WEKX FM, 6-9pm. Phoenix (Gay & Lesbian Awareness) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Info: 615-385-1510.

Tuesdays
Phoenix (Gay & Lesbian Awareness) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Info: 615-385-1510.

Wednesdays
Phoenix (Gay & Lesbian Awareness) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Info: 615-385-1510.

Thursdays
P-PLUG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Support group, St. John's Episcopal Church, 3212 Grand Ave. Info: 615-394-6144.
Phoenix (Gay & Lesbian Awareness) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Info: 615-385-1510.
Into the Night (Women's Lesbian Awareness) Meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Info: 615-372-5778.

Fridays
Phoenix (Gay & Lesbian Awareness) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30 and 10pm. Info: 615-372-5778.

MCC (Gay & Lesbian Awareness) Closed meeting for gay men and lesbians. MCC. 8pm. Info 615-327-4614.

Saturdays
Twelfth Street (ACGA) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Noon. Info: 615-385-1510.
Phoenix (Gay & Lesbian Awareness) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Info: 615-385-1510.

NASHVILLE

Mondays
Gay Interancy Association Open meeting for lesbian and gay soberians. MCC, 12pm. Info 615-385-1510.

Nashville CARES - HHI BPA *Support Group* 6:30pm: ARCADIS Support Group, Brewery, 6pm. Support Group, Brewery, 6pm. Support Group, Brewery, 6pm. MCC. 8pm. Lambda Group. Closed Alliance meeting for gay men and lesbians, Unitarian Church, 6pm.

Tuesdays
Nashville CARES ARCADIS Support Group. Info 615-385-1510.

Al-Anon Closed meeting, MCC, 6:30pm.

P-PLUG Meeting of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, 4th Tuesday, St. John's Episcopal Church, 7:30pm. Info 615-452-0332.

MTSU Lambda Association Meeting for lesbian and gay Middle Tennessee University students, faculty, staff, and alumni. INFO: 615-320-0288.

Sundays
Dionis Bible Study (Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous) Closed meeting, MCC, 8pm. Info 615-327-4614.

Gay Cable Network Vazcon Channel 36 (Community Access Television) 5pm.

Special Events

Saturday, April 29
Planning Meeting Meet to plan Nashville Lesbian and Gay Pride Week '89, Nashville. Info 615-297-4293.

Sunday, April 30

Your nonprofit event can be listed free in Dances. Write to Dare, Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204-4042, or phone 615 327-3273 and leave a message. Please include information about time, location, cost, sponsor, and a contact person's name with address and/or phone number for verification. Deadline noon Tuesday for publication next Friday.
California: no gay student housing

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, officials have denied a request to allow same-sex couples to live in school-owned housing allotted to married couples. The Associated Student Senate proposed that the university make the housing available to lesbian and gay couples, but the proposal was turned down, because of what officials said were legal problems and a shortage of housing for married students.

Student Senator Kevin Goebel, author of the proposal, said that the body would pursue the matter, and had begun meeting with representatives from the National Center for Lesbian Rights (formerly the Lesbian Rights Project) to discuss available legal challenges to the decision, as well as ways to apply pressure to get the administration to change the policy.

New company formed to hire PWAs

MULTITASKING SYSTEMS OF NEW YORK, Inc., a non-profit provider of photocopying and other office services, has been formed specifically to hire people with AIDS (PWAs) and AIDS-related complex (PWARC). The New York Times reported that the new company has ten employees, all of whom have AIDS, ARC or are HIV-positive.

"We noticed that patients were either fired from their jobs when their employers learned of the AIDS diagnosis or they were unable to continue in physically demanding or psychologically stressful jobs, so we decided to develop an alternative work center where people could work part-time on flexible shifts," according to Linda J. Laubenstein, a hematologist and professor at the New York University Medical Center.

"Patients do better when they can work...It keeps you from being isolated and from focusing all attention on illness," she said.

Naked swimmers arrested

NORTON, OHIO, POLICE ARRESTED FOUR GAY MEN for swimming naked in an outdoor hot tub at the Loyal Oak Health and Swim Club, charging them with public indecency for being nude in the club's hot tub. The club allows nude swimming after 11 p.m.

The raid was staged after a neighbor, Edward Stokovsky, complained that he had watched through binoculars as the men "fondled" one another atop the pool's 25-foot slide.

The four were found guilty last November, but have appealed their convictions, charging that the arrests were unlawful and politically motivated.

"The innuendo and write-ups in the mass media hinted that this was a gay sin pool and these four men were sinners," said Thelma Purry, attorney for the four men.

...getting personal

**continued from page 1**

By Sunday night, Randy's pen pal had decided he liked Nashville enough to consider relocating here, maybe even enrolling at Nashville Tech and getting a job.

"I told him that he could take me to work the next day and use my car to run errands," Randy said. "Monday morning, I mentioned something about needing groceries and he offered to go to the store, so I stopped at the bank machine and got $20 so he could do that."

When the five o'clock whistle blew and Randy prepared to leave work, his pen pal was no where to be found.

"Five-thirty came and he still wasn't there. I knew I had been had," he said. "I thought sure he had stolen my car."

Calling on a friend for help, Randy went home — and found a note, which told him his car could be found at the downtown bus terminal.

Later, he discovered several items missing from his apartment.

"The next day as things began hitting home, I really became depressed. I felt so stupid for falling for his line," Randy said. "Now, looking back at everything that happened, I realize I should have gotten suspicious. But I was too trusting.

"Now I wonder if the guy was really gay or if he was just pulling off some scam?"

Randy now considers himself lucky, considering the other possibilities. And he was more than a little gun-shy about answering personal ads in the future.

However, on the Friday before his weekend guest arrived, Randy had received a packet of letters in answer to a personal ad he ran in Dare.

"Those letters had a redeeming effect. I got the letters when I needed something to lift my spirits," Randy said.

Out of the more than ten replies he received, he has met at least five of the writers. Much to his relief, he said, they were all honest and friendly.

"The very first person I met through the personal ad in Dare was very nice and I could tell from the start we could become very good friends. The interesting thing was that the people who answered all said they never went out much or had just relocated to Nashville and didn't know how to meet people," Randy said.

And they all gave very accurate descriptions of themselves: "Everything the first guy wrote was exactly as it really was."

"I think personals are not that popular in Nashville yet because people are afraid they'll get all sorts of crazies answering them. But they're really a good way of meeting people," he said. "That's the reason I ran one. I don't go out to the bars that much and how else are you going to meet someone? Sure, every so often a friend might introduce you to someone. But that doesn't happen very often."

Despite his experience with the Army vet, Randy said he would probably answer another personal ad in the future, but would be much more careful.

"And not so trusting of someone, believing everything they say," Randy conceded. "And I would encourage other people to try the personals. It's a good means of meeting someone. And who knows what it could lead to?"
Why are some people homosexual?

Part one of a two-part series by JEFF ELLIS  
Managing Editor

IT IS A QUESTION THAT has baffled scientists, psychologists, parents and the like for centuries.

Even before Alfred Kinsey released his famous report, in which he found that at least one in ten people might be homosexual, an answer was sought.

And although strides have been made in the lesbian/gay civil rights movement in the past few years, the question remains the same.

Why are some people homosexual?

Although there is no clear consensus among experts, there is a feeling among some that the "cause" for homosexuality may be biological.

"People are moving in the direction of saying there are very early influences that may indeed be biological," said James Krajeski, chair of the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) committee on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues.

Since the APA removed homosexuality from its list of disorders in 1973, there has been a move away from earlier ideas about what causes one person to be homosexual while nine other people are heterosexual.

Perhaps the most common theory has to do with feminizing mothers, distant fathers or child abusers. Those once-popular theories are debunked by any examination of the myriad personalities who are homosexual.

Today, many researchers are looking at pre-birth and early childhood events. Still others argue that sexual orientation is not innate quality, but rather a conscious choice.

Even among those researchers who ascribe to so-called biological theories, usually a biological source for homosexuality, there is still much debate: If sexual orientation is determined before birth, what causes it? Can environmental factors modify sexual orientation? Do biological theories, usually based on data gathered from gay men, apply to lesbians?

"I'm open to the idea that homosexuality is caused by a combination of things, but I really think all those things happen before someone is born," said Lee Ellis, a sociologist at Minot (South Dakota) State University.

Ellis' research, into the role of prenatal hormonal events, produces another potentially controversial question: Does stress during pregnancy alter the production of sex hormones in the mother, thus changing the hormonal levels in the brain of the fetus and does this affect sexual orientation?

Ellis' research does include data supplied by mothers of gay men who remember periods of high stress during pregnancy, especially during the second trimester. He plans a more in-depth study of some 7,000 mothers and their children to further test his theory.

A STUDY CONDUCTED by Richard Pillard, of the Boston University School of Medicine, found that 22 percent of gay men had gay or bisexual brothers, while just 4 percent of heterosexual men did. That, according to Pillard, may indicate genetic predisposition toward homosexuality.

There are, however, other experts who sneer at genetic theories and conclude that all people are born with a capacity for all forms of sexuality, but most limit their behavior because of socialization.

Past studies suggest that at least 20 percent of men have had at least one homosexual experience, but less than 10 percent are gay throughout life. Some research suggests that less than 5 percent of women are lesbians.

Results of a study conducted by the United States government, which many experts believe may prove Kinsey's one in ten figure to be wrong, are expected to be released sometime later this year.

...lend an ear

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another person. Dearhearts, we all know that the rest is history. And...why don't you wish this, then, one couple a big happy first anniversary when you next see them, because April 29 will be their special day. Congrats to Judy & Jim.

I heard there were some mighty odd goings-on at the Jungle last Tuesday night. Seems there was a fundraiser for Advance, and the show was great. That's not the odd part. Who is Wanda Monnaie, and what is her cousin), and the list goes on and on. Why don't you call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper.

Not to mention the wonderful Rhet and Company, Erica Stormy (no, Scotty McMahan), you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you may not call her the Stormtrooper.

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Patrice Lee remembers her father as "the lowest point of my life," the night she was publicly separated from her church in Philadelphia for being a lesbian.

As one of two speakers addressing the problem of black lesbians and gay men, Lee shared her experience of that eventful night with an audience of about 30 people at the Metropolitan Community Church/Nashville (MCC) Church and Community Forum last Saturday.

That night, Lee recalled, she was summoned to a special meeting of her church, the same church she had attended since childhood and distinguished herself in as an adult with her leadership in the church choir and other church functions. For Lee, the church had become almost a second home, and doubly important to her since the pastor of the church also happened to be her father.

Lee knew that her parents, both being very conservative religiously, were having problems dealing with her lesbianism, which had been revealed just shortly before, but she said she was totally unprepared for their reaction. Her father, as elder of the church, presided over the special church meeting, which contrary to Lee's expectations, instead of rewarding her for her services to the church, convened to separate her from the body of the church.

"On that day," Lee said, "I was publicly, without any passion on my father's side, excommunicated from the community, from the church, and from my family, and it was done in the manner of 'this is it, you are not welcome here, you will not come back here — at all.'"

"I had always thought I knew what it was like to be alone, and now here was everything I was familiar with, literally, very concretely together, turning its back. Since then, Lee said she has been putting the pieces of her life back in order.

"What I've done," she said, "is started to reconcile my relationship with the community that I live in with the God that I believe in with myself."

That reconciliation included dealing with the boundaries she had created in leading her double life as a married woman and a lesbian.

When she was just out of high school, Lee's parents had pushed her into marriage at the age of seventeen. For a while, she said, she was able to keep up the pretense of marriage, but it was, according to Lee, "a very empty existence."

That was when she started leading what she called her "double life," attending to marriage on one front and venturing out to the lesbian bars in Philadelphia on another.

Then, Lee said, she met "the magic lady," the one she wanted to share her life with. Lee invited her to a church function, at which Lee's mother detected something between the women. Lee's parents confronted her with their suspicions, but Lee said she stood her ground.

"I could not deny what was important to me anymore," she said. Shortly thereafter, her church dismissed Lee.

Today, Lee said, "it doesn't take the acceptance of any particular person or group of people any more for me." Though she added a happy note when she said that she recently has been in contact with her mother, who is planning a visit to Tennessee for Mother's Day.

Religion also played a large part in the other featured speaker's life. An anonymous Nashville theology student, the panelist told a similar story of being raised in a conservative religious family, also with a Pentecostal minister as his father.

Speaking of his struggle with his sexuality, the panelist noted an overwhelming homophobia in the black community.

"To hear the oppression come from an oppressed group," he said, "was distressing to him, and asked of black churches, "Where is the compassion? Where is the love?"

Both panelists agreed that there is a lack of support systems for black lesbians and gay men in Nashville. "You spend a lot of time in isolation," said Lee.

Paul Tucker, MCC pastor and moderator of the discussion, expressed hope that the forum would raise the consciousness of Nashville's lesbian and gay community and make things easier for the city's black lesbians and gay men. Tucker acknowledged some problems in the past with racist tendencies in MCC and other parts of Nashville's lesbian and gay community, but said, "You don't see so much of that now."

Tucker also noted that the largely-white MCC/Nashville now has several black members, but he hopes to improve on those numbers and provide in MCC a space where black lesbians and gay men can meet with one another and the rest of Nashville's lesbian and gay community.

Lee agreed with Tucker that diversity in Nashville's lesbian and gay community is something to be desired. But, she noted that, in her experience, people were often more similar than dissimilar.

Lee stated, concluding the discussion, "I'm human. That's the bottom line for me."

...Nashville Pride Week plans

Campbell urged those interested in helping with preparations for the events to attend the next committee meeting, Sunday, April 30. She also reminded any interested organizations or groups to start thinking about floats and banners for this year's parade.

For more information, contact Campbell at (615) 297-4293.
Neil Miller is the author of *In Search of Gay America: Women and Men in a Time of Change*, published this month by Atlantic Monthly Press (324 pages, $18.95, hardcover), which is reviewed by Jeff Ellis on page 9.

Among the places Miller visited while doing research for the book were Johnson City, Knoxville and Memphis; substantial portions of *In Search of Gay America* are devoted to descriptions of gay and lesbian life in those cities. After completing a two-week, seven-city tour to promote the book, Miller would like to begin work on a new book, probably a biography, perhaps of a gay person.

Dare Book Editor Sherre Dyden reached Miller by telephone at his home in Somerville, Massachusetts last week. —Editor

SHERRE DYDEN: Why don't you start by telling a bit about yourself.

NEIL MILLER: I'm a journalist by profession. I'm 43. I was the news editor of the *Gay Community News*, which is a weekly gay paper in Boston. I did that in the seventies, which is a while ago. I've been a free-lance writer and was a staff writer for the Boston Phoenix, which is a weekly paper here—not a gay paper. It's the alternative paper in Boston. I've done a lot of free-lancing for other publications in Boston.

This is my first book. What I tried to do in the book was sort of first person reportage. I traveled around interviewing gay people all over the country; to different gay communities talking about people's lives and my impressions of gay and lesbian life.

One of the things that I was really trying to do was not to focus particularly on the large urban centers—New York, San Francisco, Chicago, L.A., whatever. I tried to get a broader picture of what it's like to be a gay person in places like Tennessee—in smaller towns in the South and Midwest and in rural areas.

Some big cities, too, but I was trying to give a wider range of people's experiences of life.

That was my main purpose in writing this book. And I thought, it's about 20 years after Stonewall, which is credited with being the beginning of the gay and lesbian liberation movement.

I wanted to see where things were and how much had changed.

Living in a big city that is relatively accepting of gay people, where things are relatively secure, I thought the real test of how much things have changed was to try to get out of the bigger cities and travel around. I spent two years writing and researching this book.

How different is it out here? Is it significantly different?

I think it really varies. One of the things I felt was happening in a city like Boston was that gay people were less marginalized and more able to be open, and integrate their sexuality with the rest of their life. Not just live in a little gay pocket or not be in the closet, but be—

Their life was in many respects like everyone else's. That's basically what I found traveling around as well.

There was still less change in a lot of smaller places—far smaller than Nashville, like Johnson City. Well, Johnson City has a gay group. But I was in Seima, Alabama, where every gay man; so I was told, was in a heterosexual marriage. It really seemed like back in the Fifties in terms of a place like that. But there were a lot of other kinds of small towns and rural areas where I found that people could be open and still be very involved in things.

I went to this tiny town in Missouri that had a gay mayor. He's now in his fifth term in office.

I tried to get a broader picture of what it's like to be a gay person in places like Tennessee—in smaller towns in the South and Midwest and in rural areas.

It's a town of about 418 people. In his latest race I think he didn't even have any opposition. This is not exactly typical, but I did find some gay dairy farmers in Minnesota.

I found a couple of women that live on the outskirts of Knoxville, a place called Louisville. It's a tiny place, not exactly a suburb of Knoxville, but an exurb or something.

One of the women had purchased a herd of cows, a strange breed that was in danger of dying out or something. She managed to buy it and was living on this property where she had grown up. Her mother was living next door and she was busily starting to raise these cows.

These are just not your stereotypical gay experiences. She was active in the gay group in Knoxville and sort of an example that there were a lot more options to her and to gay people around than there had been. I saw this both in larger cities and smaller towns.

People have the perception that things are much more repressed here in the South than in other parts of the country, even in southern cities.

I spent some time in Knoxville. I spent some time in Birmingham—those were the two southern cities I spent the most time in, and also Jackson, Mississippi. I do believe the South is the most socially conservative area of the country. I thought that in those cities people were somewhat less open than in many northern cities and certainly than the west coast.

One thing that I generally tended to find was that in the last several years in many of the big cities you have an openly gay middle class—doctors, lawyers, professionals. There are still plenty of those people in the closet, but you're seeing that more and more. I didn't see that very much in Knoxville and Birmingham. People are still afraid to come out, especially the middle class. I think to have a strong and influential gay community you have to have those kind of middle class people be open about being gay. I didn't find that in those southern cities. I thought that was an indication that, in at least those cities, things were a little slower.

How did you actually go about doing the research? Where did you go, how did you meet people?

Often I'd write to different gay groups in different places; I'd establish one contact person in a city or in an area. Some things were different.

For example, I went out to Knoxville with [National Gay and Lesbian Task Force staffer] Sue Hyde. I knew she was going and she had told me about the case of these two guys in Johnson City who had been given five years for having sex in a parked car.

Very early in my research I decided that I wanted to go to the South. I thought that the South was probably the most socially conservative area of the country. So I wrote to somebody in Birmingham and I wrote to somebody in Jackson. I'd get places and they would— because people were generally very nice and very helpful—suggest people for me to talk to.

I wanted to interview a gay or a lesbian coal miner. I just got this idea. I started calling up different women's groups in West Virginia. I looked in the Gay leather Pages but in West Virginia there was really very little. So I would call the head of NOW in some city and she'd recommend me to somebody else.

Finally I got in touch with somebody in Morgantown who was gay, but not a coal miner. I asked her if she knew any lesbian coal miners or gay coal miners. She didn't but eventually I went out there. I spent four or five days there and eventually did find a lesbian coal miner. That was one of the more difficult things.

Did you encounter any problems being a man doing research about women?

It's hard for me to know. I found women generally to be as responsive as men. There may have been some separatist lesbians who wouldn't want to talk to me, so I missed that part of things. It's hard for me to know if women would have been a little less open with me. But I thought people generally were pretty open.

I was in San Antonio, for example, and did a lot of interviews with Latina lesbians. I thought they were some of the most open with me of
I think it's been a major problem for years. I was extremely aware of it when I was editor for Gay Community News back in the seventies and it's still true. I think it's weakened the gay movement in general that there's been this small group of activists and then this larger group of apolitical people.

But I found in a lot of places that AIDS, at least among the men, was breaking that down to some extent. There were lots of people who have previously been quite apolitical and kind of looked down on gay activists, that because of AIDS were getting more involved in the community and felt a reason to be active, felt a sense of crisis because their friends were getting sick and dying. That it was important to be a part of the political end of things.

You have to somehow get the masses of gay people involved. I do think that AIDS has broken that down some. But its one of the reasons why the gay movement's been rather weak over the years, although Nashville, from what I read, does seem pretty active.

The March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights seems to have stirred people to action in Nashville. Was that the case elsewhere?

I thought it was. I also thought that period seemed to correspond with ACT UP groups being formed all over the country. I thought that was sort of a direct result.

Shortly afterwards, I think, in Boston they were trying to pass a gay rights bill in the legislature and all of these people chained themselves to the gallery. There seemed to be a lot of civil disobedience type activity, but I think that happened in the bigger cities. But that is my general impression that that's what happened.

What about relationships between gay men and lesbians?

I think that was something that was mixed. I was in Miami and it seemed like the men's community and the women's community were completely split.

I think that's been an issue over the years in the lesbian and gay community, that women and men often didn't work together. I think that's been breaking down and there is a lot more working together.

I think again that AIDS has been a factor. A lot of lesbians have gotten involved in AIDS organizing and gay men have realized they need lesbians to be on their side. I was somewhat encouraged by that. I also thought that in smaller places men and women tended to be closer together.

I thought separatism was kind of on the decline. Again, I don't know.

A lot of women felt that many gay organizations continue to be dominated by men and that was very frustrating. For example, in Knoxville Ten Percent, my impression was that some of the women felt that the men were running things, that it was a mostly male organization. There's generally been a struggle for women to be in high positions or to be influential in a lot of gay groups.

What about lesbian and gay activism in other arenas?

I tended to find that a lot of working within the Democratic Party at least seemed to be moving forward. There were all these Gay Democratic Clubs all over the country. Movement in that direction tended to be stronger that in had some years ago.

Still, there are plenty of people who are concerned with forging alliances with other groups and being outside of that party arena. I think particularly as the gay middle class gets more working together, let's call it the Southern white male. I think that's also had an impact.

What was the most fun thing you did?

Well, it was fun just going to all these out of the way places I would never go to. I enjoyed the travel. I went to a black gay bar in Memphis. I really thought it was fun and exciting, it was so different than anything I'd experienced.

Do you think lesbian and gay movement activists see devoting energy to other organizations as undermining the cause?

Possibly. It's tough. People have a lot of identities. You're not just a lesbian, you're a woman and those issues are important.

Let's say that lesbians are involved in NOW and are in the closet. I really don't think, if that's their main energy, it's certainly not helpful to the gay movement. We need a strong gay and lesbian movement.

But I also think it's important for gay people to be visible in other organizations, whether it be NOW or the Democratic Party. To be open about it.

I do think there are enough gay people out there that you can do all sorts of things. Also, you want to lead a full life, your whole identity can't be gay or lesbian.

What about cultural differences?

I think it's harder to have a gay identity if you're black or Hispanic than perhaps if you're white. That's just my perception. I got the sense that while it might be acceptable in the black community, for males anyway, to have sex with other males — or be a little more acceptable than among whites — if you took on a gay or lesbian identity it was harder.

What about tensions between the people who are active in gay and lesbian movement politics and the people who aren't?
Reviewed by Sherre Dryden
Book Editor

Among the childhood memories that shape my adult self is an event that took place when I was 10 or 11. I spent time each summer with my maternal grandmother, who lived outside Athens, Georgia. I thought of her as a strong woman. The middle child in a family of many children, she had been reared in poverty. As a young woman she worked in sewing plants, leaving my mother and my uncle with a succession of black women who tended the children and the house. My grandfather was a construction worker. I never wondered how it was that a family could barely afford to keep itself fed, to pay a housekeeper.

Later, my grandmother set herself up in business as a seamstress. Black women still worked for her, cleaning the house, doing finger work on the clothes she made, helping put up vegetables in the summer. For wages, added to whatever money she gave them, they were given cloth they could not use, clothes they did not want, food we would not eat. Sometimes she would tell me to keep my mouth shut as she lied to them, giving them big enough pieces of cloth to make dresses for themselves, a new sweater or a paper sack of butter beans brought from the man down the road.

I never thought about it twice. It seemed clear to me that these black women were my grandmother's friends. White women only came to her house to pick out pattern and cloth for a new dress. They left as quickly as possible, not inquiring about her health or her grandchildren or her son in the navy. The black women called her "Miss Clara" and she called them by their first names, but they forget what, and set the table for three. That even when I was 10 or 11.

When my grandmother passed from the gate to the gated South, you will remember. That it was obviously difficult to write so much of herself, is touching. Her openness is bravely self-disclosing. Her trust of her audience imposes. For some the barriers may simply be suspicions of anything too intellectual. For others they are the self-defensive barriers hooks' style breaks down more barriers than it imposes. For some the barriers may simply be suspicions of anything too intellectual. For others they are the self-defensive barriers constructed when we feel threatened. Bell hooks is so swift and gentle that there's little inclination to build defenses.

Critics say it isn't academic enough, that it undermines rather than validates black women as thinkers and scholars. But for most readers, some who I suspect will not admit it, hooks' style breaks down more barriers than it imposes. For some the barriers may simply be suspicions of anything too intellectual. For others they are the self-defensive barriers constructed when we feel threatened. Bell hooks is so swift and gentle that there's little inclination to build defenses.

Talking Back is also inspiring. It engages the emotions in two directions: toward Gloria Watkins, growing up black, female and poor in rural Kentucky as well as toward the radical consciousness of bell hooks. This dual track gives the book exceptional power (even for readers who do not already worship the author).

As a primer on critical consciousness, Talking Back is gently directive, quietly angry. Largely because of hooks' style — more like conversation around the kitchen table on a summer evening than academic prose — highly controversial and radical thoughts seem obvious. Working for change becomes not only challenging and exciting, but also productive.

Hooks has been taken to task for this style. Critics say it isn't academic enough, that it undermines rather than validates black women as thinkers and scholars. But for most readers, some who I suspect will not admit it, hooks' style breaks down more barriers than it imposes. For some the barriers may simply be suspicions of anything too intellectual. For others they are the self-defensive barriers constructed when we feel threatened. Bell hooks is so swift and gentle that there's little inclination to build defenses.

Talking About Gloria, hooks is bravely self-disclosing. Her trust of her audience, for it was obviously difficult to write so much of herself, is touching. Her openness creates a feeling of reciprocity. If she has found it necessary and possible to open up so much of herself, then I (the reader) must not betray that trust.

And it is, finally, the themes of trust and betrayal that run throughout the essays that constitute Talking Back. Talking Back thinking feminist, thinking black is, as hooks describes it, "back-talk." The answers to all of those buts, what-abouts and how-can-yous that she must have been hearing for a long time now. It is also a moving and deeply felt writing call to action for anyone willing to work for liberation.
The Boy's are coming, the Boy's are coming.

And here's your only chance to see them, Nashville. Dare is proud to present the new Memphis production of Mart Crowley's classic 1968 play The Boys in the Band, directed by Dennis Massey.

One performance only, 9:00 p.m., Saturday, April 22, at Metropolitan Community Church, 131 15th Avenue North, Nashville. Admission $5.00 at the door. Proceeds benefit Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance.

Presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.
Questions? Phone the Dare office, (615) 327-DARE.
The Vanderbilt University Community Affairs Board has appointed a subcommittee to make a recommendation about the addition of sexual orientation to the school's antidiscrimination policy, and the subcommittee has held hearings on the matter, accepting testimony both in support of and in opposition to the proposed policy. One of those who spoke in favor of the change was Roy Sanders, an employee of the school. Here is the text of Sanders' statement to the subcommittee. — Editor

RECENTLY, THERE HAS BEEN a series of letters written to the Vanderbilt Hustler that have been both in favor of and opposed to the addition of sexual orientation to the university's anti-discrimination policy. Reading these letters has strengthened my belief that the policy is not the issue. I do not know that I know the actual issue. There are several possibilities. Is the issue sin? Perhaps it is acceptance, or crime. Is it tolerance and the struggle for basic human rights? Perhaps it is all of these, and perhaps it is none.

When I testified before the Community Affairs Board, I remarked that it seemed amazing to me that we should even be having hearings. I struggled with the fact that my employment should be challenged simply because of who I am and how I have chosen to lead my life. However, I came to the conclusion that if such a challenge could be made, then I would do what I could to protect myself and those who have chosen to live as I do. Who am I and what is my choice? How I choose to live is my choice and one that I alone can make. I have chosen to accept the consequences of leading this lifestyle. I do not ask anyone to accept me. I don't even ask for your tolerance. However, I will not stand by and allow you to hurt me or anyone while I have the ability to challenge your actions and indeed even your thoughts. I know that it would be difficult if not impossible to change the way you think. I have, however, begun to change the way that I think.

For many years, I have been told that the love I hold, that the sexual company I keep is bad, even evil. I believed that I was evil. I was convinced that my essence, my very being was somehow inferior or unworthy of the privileges and happiness experienced by those of more usual feelings and lifestyles. I lived in fear of discovery. I feared that if I were to be discovered my chances for peace and happiness, for fulfillment, would be destroyed. I feared the shame that I would bring upon myself and upon my family. I feared the loss of acceptance and love of people who were and are very important to me. These fears presented themselves long before I ever chose to act on my feelings, long before I knew others who shared the same thoughts, desires and feelings. Such was the power of the message that I heard from those around me.

AS I WAS JUST ENTERING adolescence and beginning to establish myself as a separate and distinct individual, my self-esteem was shattered when someone mentioned faggots or queers. Accusations were often hurled in all directions, so fearful and hurtful the very idea of being homosexual was to those around me.

I even found myself at times spreading rumors and hurling others each time driving myself further away from my own self-acceptance, worthy of love, worthy of life.

Now I find myself on a path to restore my soul, to recapture what for so many years I denied myself. I am a human being who is worthy. Worthy as you are of basic human respect and dignity. I may not agree with you. I may not approve of your lifestyle. I may never. As long as your actions do not hinder me or any other in their pursuit of fulfillment, I will not challenge you. Your life is yours to do with as you feel you must. Mine is the same. SO YOU SEE, it is not important that you accept me. It is not important or necessary that you tolerate me. It is not even important that you love me. It is important to me that you allow me to lead my life as I must. If you choose not to, then I will challenge you. You may dismiss me from your employment. You may drive me from my house and my home. You may threaten my life. You may even killed. You will not, however, drive me again into a life of self-hatred and a hatred of others that does not allow me to see my or their human dignity and worth.

Perhaps all of the issues listed above are important. Certain to some, sin is important, as is acceptance, crime, tolerance and human rights. They have at times all been important to me. For now, however, that is not the issue for me. The issue is my ability to live my life in such a way that I deny no one their dignity and essence of being, be she or he African-American, Native American, un-American or any American, free or imprisoned, fat or thin, disabled or able-bodied, old or young, religiously fundamentalist, liberal or nonreligious, straight, lesbian, gay or somewhere in between. Never again will I deny mine.

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A P R I L 2 1 - 2 7, 1 9 8 9  
G A Y A N D L E S B I A N  P R E S S  A S S O C I A T I O N

Lend an ear

by JAAN STURGIS

Staff Writer

Congratulations and beyond to TIM ROBERTS of Bowling Green fame (that infamous writer for the Louisville Courier-Journal). For what, you say? Well, my dear, Tim has done it again. Boston University has accepted him into their highly selective masters-level program in creative writing. This program selects a mere dozen students each year from the over 200 who apply. We'll miss you, Tim, when you head to the East Coast, but our very best wishes will go with you!

Speaking of Bowling Green — did you know that two Nashvillians (unbeknownst to each other) were in that fair city in the K-Y state the same evening last week? Well, my dear, my sources tell me that TERRY RALSTON was seen dining at one of Bowling Green's finest restaurants. Why is is that my mouth is hanging and I can't remember the name? Whish whom, you say? Well, the word's out that he's dating a boy named John. John, hmmm. Funny, I've had a John or two in my life, too. They just resist to have last names.

That same evening, PAUL TUCKER appeared in that same city. Visiting whom? Having supper, I hear. And speaking of Bowling Green, I attended a party myself there the other day. Who was there? Nashvillians Tucker, JAMES HOLLAND, DEEN THOMPSON, and yours truly. The bunch from Bowling Green was the city's finest, and included FOREST HALFORD, DON SMITH, ROGER BANTON, BILLY ISAACS, TIM ROBERTS and WILLIE SYLVIS.

Willie spent a goodly amount of time chatting with 'me. Apparently Willie has worked at the same Bowling Green grocery for 16 years. Imagine that! I can'tathom staying at a job for 16 months, let alone 16 years. Anyway, Willie has worked his way up to produce manager (no wisecracks about top fruit, please). In his spare time away from the store, he tells me that he adores shopping (don't we all) He also loves traveling around the countryside. When asked what he likes to do best in a faraway city he responded with a roaring "shopping." The second runner-up was "I love bowling." I myself have only heard about such things.

Recently, on one of my rare outings in Nashville, I ate at the Sub 'n Pub. It's a dandy little place near Thompson Lane and Murfreesboro Road. JOEY CHEEK and JEFF POOLE are owners of the place, which caters to a mainly gay clientele on Saturday and Sunday evenings when they feature an all-you-can-pig, er, eat buffet, with wonderful pasta dishes, coleslaw, potato salad and a yummy whipped dessert that maybe, if you ask nicely, Jeff will give you the recipe for. Of course, I wasn't satisfied with just the info about the restaurant. I wanted to know how this smiling couple met. Well, dearhearts, it appears that Jeff played in a gospel band called the BLACKWOOD BAND and was touring in Alabama, Georgia (the American Georgia, not the Russian one).

After their gig for the evening, Jeff returned to his room, alone (and perhaps) a bit sullen. He headed for one of the town's "meat market" dives, which is a gay bar on the dance floor with ** continued on page 4
Back by Popular Demand!

Cinderella
Choreography - Edward Myers
Music - Sergei Prokofiev
With the Nashville Symphony Orchestra
May 5, 1989 - 8 p.m.
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James K. Polk Theater
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Following each performance there will be a reception to meet Cinderella, Prince Charming and members of the Company. Evenings: Wine and Cheese.
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BIANCA PAIGE
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Sunday, April 30
“Diana Hutton Presents” starring
VICKI VINCENT,
Miss Gay America 1988
CHARITY CASE,
Miss Gay Illinois 1989
ZSA ZSA PRINCIPAL,
Miss Gay South USA 1989
and DIANA HUTTON,
Miss Gay USA 1987
Shows at 11 and 12:30

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Announcements

• YARD SALE Saturday, April 22, 8am - 10 am. 1610A 19th Avenue South, Nashville. Mostly toys and female children's clothes, size infant - 7.

• COMING to Panama City Beach? Stay where you'll be comfortable. GRANDE GULF MOTEL, 6014 Thomas Dr. (804) 234-3951. Now featuring Pub's Pub. Open every day 4-2. Check the specials. Mention this ad.

• Don't miss The Boys in the Band, presented by Dare, 9pm, April 22, at Metropolitan Community Church, 131 15th Avenue North, Nashville. $5.00 at the door benefits Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA).

• PLEASE NOTICE our new phone number: 615-327-DARE (327-3273). Our mailing address is still the same: Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204-0422.

• Help fight proposed new homophobic changes in the law. Donate to, volunteer for, Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance. Advance, Box 24181, Nashville, TN 37202.

• Dare classifieds work! Those two vacuum cleaners got sucked right up.

• Catch our new look! Watch GCN/Nashville Tuesdays at 8pm, Saturdays at 8pm. On Nashville's Cable 35.

• LONG HOURS, HARD WORK, NO PAY. Dare is accepting applications from writers. Learn community-oriented journalism, and be one of the best. Dare, Box 40422, Nashville, 37204 or phone 615-327-DARE.

Homes


• First Home. A 3 bedroom, 1 bath, house for rent with a fenced yard for $400.00. Call 615-402-1552.

• Shut up! No calls. All dogs gone.

• I certify that I am the person named above.

• The idea of George Michael having a relationship with (a woman) is as likely as me having sex with a dog.

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• Ads received by noon Tuesday will run the following Friday. Please enclose check or money order.

• To respond in a response drawer ad, write to: Dare Drawer 36, Box 40422, Nashville, 37204 or phone 615-327-DARE.

• We reserve the right to edit ads, and to reject any ad. Sensually explicit or exploitative ads will not be accepted. No ad will be accepted without signature and advance payment in full. We assume no responsibility for inadvertent mistakes. Responders are available if you do not wish to use your own address. To respond in a response drawer ad, write to:

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