Police investigate Vol State professor’s murder
by JEFF ELLIS
Editor

Homicide detectives in metropolitan Nashville are continuing their investigation into the murder of a Volunteer State Community College professor found dead Sunday in his Goodlettsville home.

Bob Sibert, 41, of 113 Heathcote Court in Goodlettsville, was found dead in his bedroom late Sunday after his ex-wife reported him missing to police earlier in the day.

Glad only in his underwear when discovered by authorities, Sibert apparently died of a gunshot wound to his right temple. Police Tuesday found Sibert’s blue 1987 Toyota, missing since the incident, in an east Nashville parking lot.

Goodlettsville police told reporters that no substantive leads were found among evidence in the car, but that police forensic specialists were attempting to lift fingerprints from the vehicle.

Although Metro homicide detectives could not confirm reports that Sibert regularly patronized The Jungle Lounge, a gay nightclub at 306 Fourth Ave., South, Dare has learned from other sources that detectives did visit the club hoping to develop such a lead in the case.

Police further said that rumors of death threats directed at Sibert — made since his divorce three years ago from Nashville artist Maki Sibert — were apparently unfounded. Maki Sibert reported her former husband missing Sunday after he was two hours late to pick up their 14-year-old son.

Sibert had taught at Gallatin’s Vol State for about three years.

Sibert’s murder comes just three months after the brutal slaying of 34-year-old Barry McDonald, who was found dead in his Inglewood home in July. Police say McDonald was stabbed some 30 times by a still-unknown assailant. The victim died of stab wounds to the back and chest, according to the police report.

Both murders were preceded by the August, 1988, murder of Vernon Lester Larkin in the Hickory Valley area of south Nashville. Larkin, last seen leaving The Jungle with a drifter known as “Bubba,” was found beheaded to death in the living room of his apartment. His killer has not been apprehended.

The investigation into the Sibert murder is being spearheaded by members of the Goodlettsville Police Department, with assistance from homicide detectives in the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department. At press time, a spokesperson for Metro police said he could not comment on the investigation.

The McDonald and Larkin investigations are open, although sources concede that solving the cases may take much longer. •

Food & Drug Administration plans ddl tests

Promising new AIDS drug may be made available more quickly
by JACKI MOSS
Staff Writer

If all goes according to plan developed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Institutes of Health, evaluation and availability of the HIV antiviral agent dideoxyinosine (ddl) may be hastened.

Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan said that the plan reaffirms the government’s “commitment to speeding both the development and availability of promising new drugs for AIDS whenever possible.”

Dideoxyinosine has show activity against the AIDS virus in laboratory studies and in limited human studies although some people have experienced serious side effects. It was initially developed by Samuel Broder and Robert Yarchoan at the National Cancer Institute.

FDA Commissioner Frank E. Young said, “The epidemic of AIDS is extraordinary and must be met with extraordinary measures. Since ddl is still an experimental drug, it must be carefully tested and must demonstrate safety and efficacy before it can be approved. We believe, however, that it is important to offer the drug now to people with AIDS for whom the standard treatment of zidovudine (AZT) is not an option even though there are some potentially serious side effects.”

Under the new plan, clinical trials designed to determine the safety and effectiveness of ddl will be conducted by the AIDS Clinical Trials Group of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in collaboration with the drug manufacturer, Bristol-Myers Company. The trials will enroll 2,000 people with AIDS and/or ARC (AIDS related complex).

Simultaneously, the FDA has granted Bristol-Myers permission to distribute ddl through a Treatment IND (investigational new drug) for patients with AIDS or advanced ARC who cannot take AZT because of...
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Sundays  
Metropolitan Community Church  
Worship service, Unitarian Church. 7:30pm.

Mondays  
Chattanooga CARES Closed support group. 6:30pm. Info (423) 266-2422.

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

Clarksville
Thursdays  
Gay Academic Union Austin Peay State University group for lesbians and gay men. Room 319, Joe Morgan University Center, APSU. 4:30pm. Info (615) 648-7107.

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

Mondays  
ala Response Knoxville PWA Support Group. 7-8:30pm. Info (615) 523-AIDS.
Gay Gratitude Group Open, nonmember. Alcoholic Anonymous. Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church, 3229 Kington Pike. 7pm.

Tuesdays  
ala 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) 595-9066.
Knoxville’s Ten Percent Monthly meeting, 2nd Tuesday only, 8pm. 1200 N. Central. Info (615) 521-6546.

Wednesdays  
ala Response Knoxville HIV Support Group, 6:30pm. Info (615) 523-AIDS.

Murfreesboro
Thursdays  
MTSU Lambda Support group for lesbian and gay students, faculty, staff and alumni of Middle Tennessee State University. 7:30pm. Info (615) 352-7839

Nashville
Mondays  
Gay Alternative Hour Radio show, WYVL-FM 90, 5-7pm.  
Memphis Gay Coalition Business meeting, 1st Monday, Rm A, Memphis Public Library, Peabody & Maclennan. Info (615) 324-4597.
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholic Anonymous) Open meeting. Memphis Lamba Center. 8pm. Info (612) 272-9549.

Tuesdays  
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholic Anonymous) Open meeting. Memphis Lamba Center. 5:30 and 8pm. Info (612) 272-9549.

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Wednesdays  
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholic Anonymous) Open meeting. Memphis Lamba Center.

Tri-Cities
Sundays  
Metropolitan Community Church Worship service, 7pm. Holston Valley Unitarian Church. Info (615) 928-4933.

Tuesdays  
The Open Door (Alcoholics Anonymous) Weekly group, 8:30pm. Info (901) 796-5074.

Wednesdays  
The Open Door (Alcoholics Anonymous) Weekly group, 8:30pm. Info (901) 796-5074.

Big events

Saturday, October 28  
Organizational meeting  
Meet to organize the newly emerging Tennessee Lesbian/Gay Community Center. 7:30pm. Info (615) 320-8508.

Sunday, November 2-5  
Benefit show  

Thursday, November 9  
Concert  
Romanovsky & Phillips. At First Unitarian-Uni­versalist Church, 1808 Woodmont Blvd. Nashville, $10 single, $15 couple, 7:30pm. Info (615) 269-4283.

Friday, November 10  
Concert  
Romanovsky & Phillips. At University of Tennessee Music Hall, Knoxville. $9 advance, $12 at the door. 8pm. Info (615) 955-8666.

Sunday, November 12 & Sunday, November 19  
Seminar  
Caring for Persons with AIDS in the Home. Sponsored by AIDS Response Knoxville (ARK) and the American Red Cross. At Red Cross Bldg, Knoxville. $15 registration. 12:30-5pm both days. Info (615) 523-AIDS.

Your nonprofit event can be listed free in the Cumberland. Write to: Box 4042, Nashville, TN 37204-0422, or phone 615 277-Date and leave a message. Please include information about time, location, cost, sponsor, and a contact person's name with address and phone number for verification. Deadline next Tuesday for publication next Friday.

Saturday, October 27-November 2, 1989
Rights groups join suit against skinheads

NEW YORK — A number of lawyers and lesbian and gay community groups have joined in supporting a $20 million lawsuit filed against members of a group of skinheads who allegedly assaulted Rodney Johnson, a Washington, D.C., resident, because he is gay.

The Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the District of Columbia Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the Center for Democratic Renewal, and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith are all supporting the suit. The lawsuit alleges that several skinheads beat Johnson in the head and upper body with baseball bats while screaming, "die, faggot, die."

"Lesbians and gay men have a constitutional civil right to be free from the kind of hate-motivated violence that maimed Rodney Johnson," said Paula L. Ettelbrick, legal director for Lambda Legal Defense. "We fully intend to exhaust all possible legal means to rectify this particular situation and to put an end to all hate-motivated actions against lesbians and gay men." •

Graham Chapman, openly-gay member of the Monty Python comedy troupe, died earlier this month after a long battle with cancer. — DARE FILE PHOTO

AIDS ministry top priority for Dignity/USA

WASHINGTON — Pat Roche, the newly-elected president of Dignity/USA, a ministry for lesbian and gay Catholics, named AIDS ministry as his top priority for the group.

"AIDS ministry will absolutely be this organization's number one priority," said Roche. "Through a new program, the National AIDS Project of Dignity, we will provide leadership and education to fill the void left by the Catholic Church's oftentimes inadequate efforts to minister to people with AIDS and those who are HIV positive."

Roche's platform also called for increased participation by women in Dignity and in the Church, Church condemnation of violence against lesbians and gay men, Church support for laws protecting the civil rights of lesbians and gays, and Church respect for personal dissent. •

Hospital settles suit with PWA

WASHINGTON — Howard University Hospital has settled a lawsuit brought against it on behalf of a person with AIDS by agreeing to adopt a hospital-wide policy allowing PWAs to be treated on all wards and in all rooms of the hospital, instead of confining their treatment to certain areas.

The case was filed in November 1988 by the Whitman-Walker Clinic, the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the civil rights law firm of Bernabei & Katz, on behalf of a 31-year-old woman with AIDS, identified only as Jane Doe, who claimed she was denied proper treatment by the Hospital.

"This is an important victory against AIDS-related discrimination and for decent health care for individuals with HIV," said Lynne Bernabei, lead attorney for the plaintiff. "Segregating and treating patients infected with HIV differently than other patients undermines effective infection control throughout the entire hospital population." •

Raytheon, NGRA settle

SAN FRANCISCO — National Gay Rights Advocates has won a settlement of over $60,000 from the Raytheon Company for AIDS discrimination. Raytheon paid NGRA $62,768.38 following a July 7 decision by the California Court of Appeals that upheld a lower court ruling requiring Raytheon to pay back wage, attorneys' fees, and establish an "AIDS in the Workplace" program for its employees.

The lawsuit was brought after Raytheon refused to allow John Chadbourne, a quality control analyst who was diagnosed with AIDS, to return to work in 1983. Chadbourne died of AIDS-related complications in 1985.

"People with AIDS can now feel more secure about their jobs," said Leonard Graff, NGRA legal director. "Employers who discriminate against persons with the HIV virus risk paying large cash awards, even if the employee dies." •

Insurance suit filed in Wisconsin court

SAN FRANCISCO — National Gay Rights Advocates has filed a petition in a Wisconsin Superior Court to obtain health insurance benefits for the lesbian partner of a state employee. Jerri Lynn Phillips was denied the right to add her life-partner, Lorri Tommerup, to her group health plan because the two were not legally married.

Wisconsin has a statute barring discrimination based on an employee's marital status or sexual orientation. "Wisconsin's anti-discrimination law is meaningless if Jerri Lynn and Lorri are denied employee benefits afforded to heterosexual couples," said NGRA staff attorney Cynthia Goldstein. "Equal access to family benefits is central to equal treatment." •

Border to border, cover to cover.

Tennessee's Lesbian and Gay Newsweekly

Halloween thing

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- Tuesday is Movie Night
25¢ draft & free popcorn 8 pm - 11 pm
- Beer Bust - $3 All you can drink
Wednesday 7 pm - 11 pm
Saturday 2 pm - 6 pm

**Nashville's Sunday Night Party Place!**

1700 4th Avenue South, Nashville • 615-256-9681

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**...Tennessee bans les/gay sex**

- continued from page 1

Nashville's Sunday Night Party Place!

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**...ddl trials underway**

- continued from page 1

toxicity. The FDA has also granted the company permission to distribute ddl under an open safety protocol for patients whose disease has substantially progressed despite AZT therapy and who have no other treatment options.

While the recent studies were promising, dose-related toxicities require further investigation and monitoring of the drug. The studies found that most people tolerated ddl, but some people who received dosages in the higher range experienced painful nerve damage to the feet, and, less commonly, pancreatic damage. Investigators found that the toxicities appear to be reversible if detected early and the drug discontinued.

The Phase 2 clinical trials of ddl will be a comparison of ddl and AZT (the only drug proven effective for treatment of AIDS). Protocol 116 of the trials will be randomized, double-blind study of ddl and AZT in 1,500 people, 900 of whom have had little or no treatment with AZT and 600 of whom have taken AZT from two months to a year.

Protocol 117 will compare ddl and AZT in 750 people who have been on AZT for at least a year. Protocols 116 and 117 will include 360 people who cannot take AZT because of serious drug toxicities. It will compare three different doses of ddl.

Through the Treatment IND mechanism, people who experienced severe anemia or other dose-limiting adverse reactions to AZT will be eligible to receive ddl through a program administered and funded by Bristol-Myers Company of New York. The patients on this protocol will be monitored by their physicians for toxicity, as well.

The open safety protocol offered by Bristol-Myers will allow ddl to be studied in people with AIDS whose disease has progressed substantially despite AZT therapy.

Although Bristol-Myers is not charging for the cost of the drug in any of these programs, there are likely to be physician and laboratory charges associated with receiving ddl through either the Treatment IND or open safety protocols.

Physicians and people with AIDS and/or ARC interested in these trials may call 1-800-TRIALS-A, a toll-free service offering information about AIDS clinical trials.

Physicians interested in details of the Treatment IND and open safety protocol may call Bristol-Myers at 1-800-662-7999. The company will immediately begin processing applications from physicians for their patients. Eligible patients should be receiving ddl about two weeks from approval.

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**...Allen resigns amid flap**

- continued from page 1

Approximately 200 activists gathered to protest outside the Pan Pacific Hotel in Anaheim, California, where the symposium was being held. Police arrested 39 of the demonstrators for blocking the entrance to the room where Allen was to speak on the topic, "Blacks? Animals? Homosexuals? What Is a Minority?"

The event was sponsored by the California Coalition for Traditional Values, a fundamentalist group led by the Rev. Louis Sheldon, an opponent of lesbian and gay rights.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) called Allen's participation "sad and appalling, and deeply antibithical to principles of equality and fairness."

In a letter sent to Allen before the speech, Urvashi Vaid, NGLTF executive director, said the conference "is riddled with open hostility and prejudice toward gay and lesbian citizens.

I regret that as Commission Chairman you will align yourself with some of the most virulent hatemongers in this country," wrote Vaid.

The other members of the Civil Rights Commission voted unanimously against Allen's appearance at the symposium.

"Gays and lesbians are often accused, erroneously, of using Federal funds to 'promote homosexuality,'" said Robert Bray, NGLTF public information director. "We object strenuously to the use of Federal funds and taxpayer's money for promoting bigotry."

Allen's plane was delayed by the weather and he did not arrive until after the protest.

"We've shown people that something like this can't occur, even in Orange County with its reputation for support of right-wing causes," said Jeff LeTourneau, co-founder of the Orange County Visibility League, which organized the protest.

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**Flowers for all occasions.**

And now, roses are just $10 for a gift-boxed dozen.

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Knoxville

KTP disbanded

Due to a lack of interest, Knoxville Ten Percent (KTP), an organization for lesbians and gay men has disbanded, according to a former office of the group.

KTP had been active for the past several years and earlier this year held a number of meetings and social events. However, interest in the organization waned and it is now defunct.

Memphis

MGC elects officers

Officers for the Memphis Gay Coalition (MGC) were elected during the group's annual meeting in October.

Elected were MGC president Ken Horton, vice-president Vincent Astor, treasurer Cecil McLeod and secretary John Stilwell. The officers and newly-elected board members will officially take office on January 1, 1990.

Among primary goals set for MGC in the coming year will be continued support for the Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center.

Nashville

NWA plans crafts show

Nashville Women's Alliance (NWA) is sponsoring an arts and crafts show for women artisans in December, according to organizer Barbara Savage.

The show, to be held Dec. 2 from 2 to 8 p.m. at the Unitarian-Universalist Church, 1808 Woodmont Boulevard, Nashville, hopes to include works by women artisans from throughout the region.

Any women artisans interested in participating are asked to call (615) 269-9670 or (615) 883-4833 for further details.

Tri-Cities

TAP moves to new office

Tri-Cities AIDS Project (TAP), a community-based services and education organization, recently moved into new offices at 100 Spring Street in Johnson City.

TAP will be electing a new board of directors at its November meeting. The new board can have up to 15 members, with the deadline for nominations just past.

TAP offices are available for meetings, counseling and consultation. Office hours are restricted to Tuesdays, from 1 to 5 p.m., or by appointment. Volunteers are sought to enable expansion of hours and to staff an information/referral line.

For more information, phone (615) 928-6101 or (615) 753-9647.

Homophobia meet set

A seminar entitled "Homophobia in Religion and Society" will be held Monday, Oct. 30, at the Immaculate Conception Church Hall on Summit Hill Drive and Walnut Street in Knoxville.

Sponsored by the New York-based Center for Homophobia Education, the seminar will be facilitated by Jeannine Gramick and Robert Nugent. Both have been speaking and writing on the topic of homosexuality since 1971. In 1977, they co-founded New Ways Ministry, a national reconciliation ministry for the Catholic Church and lesbian and gay people, serving as co-directors until 1984. In 1988, they co-edited THE VATICAN AND HOMOSEXUALITY and recently published "Homosexuality: Protestant, Catholic and Jewish Perspectives" for THE JOURNAL OF HOMOSEXUALITY.

Cost for the seminar is $25 in advance, $30 at the door. For information, phone (615) 522-1508.

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- DISCO DANCING with DJ Steve
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Sunday, October 29
- THE WITCHING HOUR with Paul at 3 pm
- BLACKOUT PARTY
  10 pm 'til close – Wear Black
- HOURLY DOOR PRIZES Beginning at 10 pm

Monday, October 30
- MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL
- TRICK OR TREAT with Don!

Tuesday, October 31
- HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST
  1st, 2nd and 3rd Prizes
- DISCO DANCING with DJ Steve
- HALLOWEEN PHOTOS available by Image Creations
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Second in a series by LAURA TUCKER
Staff Writer

PHIL IS A BLACK MAN, living in Nashville, who knows what it is like to encounter the twin evils of prejudice and discrimination. As a black gay man, he knows what it is like to be doubly oppressed.

He speaks candidly about his life, addressing the topics of activism, AIDS and interracial dating. Phil agreed to speak only on condition his last name not be used.

Phil's AIDS activism started with Nashville CARES, Tennessee's oldest AIDS services organization, serving as its volunteer counseling coordinator and new volunteer coordinator. He was also involved with Minority AIDS Outreach in Nashville and, during his years in Georgia, AIDS Atlanta.

"I enjoy working within the black community and educating them about the AIDS crisis. I feel I can be very effective because I am black and gay and I am very knowledgeable on the AIDS issue. I don't mind going into those black communities and using myself that way. I feel I must use my race to educate others, because unfortunately most in the black community still view AIDS as a gay white man's disease," Phil said.

The prejudice and resentment Phil encounters because he is a gay black man is further burdened by his preference for dating white men.

"Most of my relationships have been with white men. Contrary to what one may think — that it's because I want to change my color or to better myself — it's simply because that's who I am attracted to.

"I face a great deal of discrimination and prejudice from both white and black gays because I date white men. I hear comments like 'does it rub off?' or myths that black men are supposedly more well-endowed than white men," he said.

Phil belongs to an organization that lends support to interracial gay relationships called Black and White Men Together (BWMT). The group started in San Francisco years ago and grew to include chapters in Memphis and Atlanta, the two closest to Nashville. Phil is a member of the Atlanta chapter.

But hundreds of miles away is a long way for interracial gay couples to seek support. Why doesn't Nashville have a chapter when other cities of comparable size do?

"I think it's because Nashville isn't used to interracial relationships, both gay and straight. There was a very successful, white-collar white executive that I knew in Nashville who was dismissed from his job simply because his black lover once came to his office. The attitude was very clearly 'This is what you date?' So a lot of people, black and white, will go to a different city, like Atlanta, thinking it will be easier for them because there won't be anything to bring back to their hometown.

"There were several gays that I knew in Atlanta who were from Nashville, but back home they never gave me the time of day. Once we were in Atlanta, several miles away from home, they thought it was okay to date me. And I did go along with this for a while, but I knew deep down that if we were back in Nashville, we wouldn't be doing this.

"To some gay Nashvillians it's still not acceptable to date someone of a different race. For a white gay to be seen with a black lover the attitude among some whites is that he's a loser," Phil said.

SOME PEOPLE with a racist attitude, be they black or white, will go so far as to damage the reputation of someone involved in an interracial relationship, spreading rumors and lies. Others, seemingly more accepting and liberal, apparently believe the most offensive stereotypes and myths, actions which belie their own prejudices.

"Sometimes, it still bothers me. I recently met a very nice white man and we dated a few times," Phil said.\n
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recalled. "But after a while he had admitted that his biggest concern was something to do with me. I guess he just sees me as black and gay.

"The man's actions, unfortunately, are not isolated incidents. Instead, it seems that both blacks and white are apt to act that way.

"But I believe it doesn't matter who you date. It's the sense of pride, dignity and respect that you have for yourself that makes race not an issue," Phil said.

TO ILLUSTRATE his points, Phil mentioned a character created by actress/comedian Whoopi Goldberg for her one-woman show: a little black girl who puts a white towel on her head, pretending it's her "luxurious, long, blonde hair." Her mother tells her that her hair is not like that. The little girl refuses to take the towel off, saying that nobody on TV looks like her.

"So her mother tells her that no matter what she did, that even if she took a bath in bleach, she would still stay the same color. And Whoopi realizes this and says 'You're right, because I tried that once and the only thing I got was burned,'" Phil recounted. "She was talking about how it feels to be different from everybody else, to have no positive role models to look up to, and to not have a support system behind you."

Does the gay black man face more discrimination and violence from the black community, or does his lesbian sister?

"Definitely black lesbians face more prejudice and risk more bodily harm from their own community than black gay men do because black gay women are an affront to a straight black man's ego. He figures that she doesn't need him. And that just doesn't sit too well with a straight black man," Phil said. "A straight black man will tolerate a black gay man over a gay black woman because he just sees the gay black man as weak and will ignore him. But the black lesbian will anger him."

Has Phil ever encountered any violence because of his race or sexual orientation?

"No, I've never experienced any overt aggression toward me. I guess my size slows them down and makes them think twice before doing anything. And I use that to my advantage. For example, for the last two years at Nashville's gay pride parade and rally I was a peacekeeper [parade marshal]," he answered.

Has Nashville experienced any positive changes within the gay community in regard to black people?

"The attitude in Nashville has changed a great deal. People are beginning to accept blacks and whites together more. I see more and more couples coming out. Crossing the color line seems to be getting easier," he said. "There is definitely an increase in the number of blacks and women attending the bars. I'm glad that they're getting a more diverse group of people. The gay community needs to do that, encourage all to mix together because if it [the community] doesn't then the old barriers are retained and that causes one group of people to oppress another."

IF THINGS ARE getting more comfortable for gay blacks within the white gay community then what will become of the black underground?

"There will always be a black underground because there will always be gay blacks who will just feel safer there. There will always be people who will have trouble grasping their sexuality and/or who are afraid to acknowledge it. So the underground will continue to exist but I personally would like to see the need for it to decrease," he said.

"Being gay is ironically like a religion. It knows no color. Only a love for one's kind. Prejudice has no place in an already oppressed society."

"Blacks know how to feel oppressed. And they know how to fight out of it. Oppression, in general, is something both blacks and gays need to work on together. Gay is just our common denominator."

"We all need to become more educated. If you're white and you want to know more about someone who is black, just ask them. And vice versa. The only way you will learn about someone or about something is to ask."
The Nature and Purpose of the Universe

Christopher Durang’s THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE UNIVERSE is yet another in the string of somewhat disturbing and strangely amusing comedies to come from the pen of the theatre’s most daring young playwright.

Thanks to a stellar production mounted by Actor’s Playhouse of Nashville, local audiences are treated to a healthy dose of Durang-inspired lunacy. Under Greg McPeak’s direction, the music and purpose is a stimulating foray into absurdity, performed by an amazingly talented cast.

Ostensibly, Durang’s comedy focuses on the Mann family of Maplewood, New Jersey—Steve (Douglas Odom as the latent Catholic dreaming of glory through laity) and Eleanore (Karen Mundy as the abused and misused matriarch), the parents of three malformed sons: Donald (Troy Carrington), a drug pusher and a pimp; Gary (Dan McGar), a homosexual taken to wearing purple scarves; and Andy (Barry Lindsey), who is overcome by the smog and three kidnappers: “If you die, I’ll declare you a martyr and wear a red gown,” one of the assassins tells another.

Prankly, nature and purpose is a difficult play to discuss without giving the plot away. But, trust me, it’s frighteningly entertaining on the whole and slightly offensive in parts. This production’s strongest assets, however, are McPeak’s skillful direction and superb casting.

Actor’s Playhouse stalwart Karen Mundy has never been better than in her role as the nail-biting Eleanore. Mundy captures perfectly the essence of her character, from the garish purple gown she wears to the words she speaks. The four actors on stage, including Donald, Gary, Andy, and Eleanore, make for a convincing and entertaining ensemble.

Running throughout the sometimes tasteless, sometimes sick, but always hilarious vignettes that relate the Manns’ stories to the audience is Durang’s warped view of Catholicism. In its way, the nature and purpose of the universe has the same sensibilities as a John Waters film.

But simpering beneath the comedic surface is a tale of oppression and redemption, repression and resurrection. Durang’s grotesque plot twists and turns, telling in its own somewhat perversely way the story of Christ’s crucifixion (read Andy as Christ, Gary and Donald as the two thieves). Durang’s script takes no prisoners in its treatment of the Catholic patriarchy, reducing the Pope to a befuddled, confused primate stalked by assassins and pretenders. (The Pope has traveled to Weehauken to bless the air and is overcome by the smog and three kidnappers: “If you die, I’ll declare you a martyr and wear a red gown,” one of the assassins tells another.)

Frankly, nature and purpose is a difficult play to discuss without giving the plot away. But, trust me, it’s frighteningly entertaining on the whole and slightly offensive in parts.

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...continued on page 11
The Limits of Gender Blending

GENDER BLENDING: CONFRONTING THE LIMITS OF DUALITY. By Holly Devor.
reviewed by Sheree Bryan

IN HER NEW GENDER BLENDING, Holly Devor examines the processes of becoming gendered and of attributing gender through an investigation of the lives and attitudes of 14 women, most of them lesbians, who are regularly mistaken for men.

Initially, Devor's category of "gender blenders" sounds as though it could include a multitude of women. As she points out, both social scientific studies and personal experience confirm that visual indicators of maleness tend to take precedence over almost any number of indications of femaleness.

Many, if not most, short-haired women have occasionally been addressed by clerks and other strangers as "sir." For some, the mistakes are a regular occurrence. What is different about Devor's "gender blenders" is that, at some point, they actually, perhaps consciously, embraced masculinity and rejected femininity.

They "shared the assumption of the dominant patriarchal gender scheme that to be feminine and a woman was less desirable than to be masculine and a man."

Devor begins her study with introductory chapters on the biological bases of gender, including chromosomal abnormalities and the effect of hormones, and the psychological and sociological theories of gender. While she conceives that physiological sex is obviously related to gender, she dismisses studies that claim that traditionally defined characteristics of femininity and masculinity are biologically determined.

In the chapter of the psychological theories of gender, Devor outlines psychodynamic, social learning, cognitive development and gender schema theories of gender development objectively, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of each theory. Since Devor's purpose is not to explain gender development, but to examine the gender identity of a particular group, it is not necessary for her to definitively establish loyalty to one theory. For most of the remainder of the study, however, she uses Sandra Bem's gender schema theory as her base.

Gender schema theory incorporates ideas from both cognitive developmental theories and social learning theories. It proposes that children learn to classify themselves and others according to a sex-typed gender schema. According to Devor, "they learn to do this because they have a cognitive desire to classify, and a social impetus to classify according to sex or gender, rather than according to any number of possible classification schemata."

"Thus it becomes a necessary to categorize everyone as female and male (sex) and girl/woman and boy/man (gender) before any other transaction can occur."

In one sense it is unfortunate that Devor felt it necessary to include these introductory chapters, which take up nearly half of the text. The studies of the individual women are by far the most interesting part of the book, and I would have appreciated more detail. It occasionally seems that Devor assumes too much based on the evidence she presents and that she relies too much on the women's own interpretations of their lives.

More detail about the women, and more analysis by Devor would have strengthened the book. In another sense, though, these introductory chapters are important because it makes the book readily accessible to an untrained audience. Devor's language and her research method demonstrate a commitment to feminism.

As Devor's research progresses it becomes clear that the women Devor is talking about are neither academics nor social scientists. In her analysis of the individual women she always maintains a humanistic perspective.

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Military bigots

THE PENTAGON this week made news when it rejected a report on homosexuals in the military.

The report, prepared by psychologists determined that lesbians and gay men are no more likely to be security risks than heterosexuals, simply because of their sexual orientation.

For many years, military officials have contended that homosexuals are unfit for service because their sexual orientation makes them prime targets for blackmail and intelligence subterfuge. The lesbian and gay community, however, has countered that such arguments are ridiculous.

But when a report comes its way lending credence to the latter conclusion, the Pentagon once again turns a deaf ear, saying it will commission yet another report — at taxpayers' expense — to delve into the sensitive issue.

Once again, the Pentagon's hierarchy displays its ignorance, rejecting a report they commissioned, simply because it does not offer the hoped-for conclusions.

The actions by Pentagon officials, unfortunately, belie deep-seated homophobia and prejudice that does not belong anywhere in the public sector. It sends out the unfortunate message that at least part of the population is unwelcome.
**Abortion forces tough choices**

**by JACKI MOSS**
Staff Writer

NOW THAT the Supreme Court has tossed the abortion rights issue back to the states' courts, the battle lines are clearly drawn and states are beginning their individual assaults on Roe v. Wade.

Although it is far from a certainty that Roe v. Wade will be overturned by most states, the constant chipping away at women's rights to control their own bodies places the future of legal abortions for all women in the United States in jeopardy.

After abortion laws were liberalized in the 1970s, the death rate from abortions dropped dramatically. Before then, underground abortions were big business. Even organized crime was in the abortion business. And abortions were just that: business, not medicine — except for some underground factions which performed safe abortions.

A group of women in Chicago who called themselves "Janes" performed illegal, yet safe, abortions to meet the crisis. Many physicians, some of whom were genuinely concerned about women, also performed illegal abortions risking losing their medical licenses and possible criminal prosecution.

Now, with a valid fear of going back to the dark ages before abortion liberalization, some groups are looking to the future should the worst possible scenario — Roe v. Wade being overturned or abortion rights being severely constricted — become reality.

Today, most pro-choice leaders are taking a first line of defense stance of doing everything possible right now to make sure those rights are not taken away or compromised.

Cathy Fenner, executive director of Tennessseans Keeping Abortions Legal and Safe (TKALS) said, "We are not ready to give up yet and plan as if Roe v. Wade will be overturned. Our focus is to activate pro-choice people and wake them up to the fight which is at hand," she said.

"We want to convince them to contact their legislators and fight this battle at the state level, state by state. Only by their legislators hearing from more pro-choice people than pro-lifers will we make the point and make them keep Roe v. Wade from being overturned," Fenner said.

Fenner said that although she has heard of clinics in other parts of the country planning to work to blackmarket RU 486 (the highly controversial French birth control pill), she knows of no such movement locally.

Elsewhere, other groups are looking closely at training groups of women in the menstrual extraction technique. Using this technique, a pregnancy can be terminated through the eighth week. The $90 kit is now available in some areas and would probably become the primary method of self-help abortions.

As with any volatile issues, both proponents and detractors disagree vehemently about the technique. Supporters say the technique is safe and that women will prefer going to a group of trained, caring women for illegal abortions, as opposed to going to a back-alley butcher about whom they know nothing.

Those who disagree say that the method is not proven safe, especially since it may be performed by someone other than a physician. They also question whether the training afforded the people who will perform the abortion is adequate.

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Census lady to a Nazi-inspired principal's secretary.

In the process, Faw displays a range that's almost unbelievable. Hers is certainly the best individual performance seen during the early part of this theatre season.

And The Nature and Purpose of the Universe may be the most satisfying night of theatre we've had this season. It's a theatre at its best — electrifying performances delivered without fancy costumes or clownish makeup, without an epic set or inventive lighting techniques. It's theatre that attacks the senses, fully satisfying the urge to applaud.

...it's a Carnival

• continued from page 5
other such craziness.

A hit of pathos creeps into the evening with "World War 12," an allegorical tale about the destruction — and rebirth — of civilization.

And, of course, no Thurber retrospective would be complete without a salute to Walter Mitty, the middle-aged family man taken to flights of fancy.

The cast performs admirably and it's difficult to single any out for special praise (and the program was no help in determining who's who in the cast), although Jill Bates, Kirk Brown and Shelton Clark stand out with their multi-faceted performances.

But that's not to say Jerry Craighead, Karen Gardner, Greg Grimsley, Dan Hayes, Michelle Thompson and Lorna Lee weren't good.

On the contrary, the entire company gave good performances, despite a few weak moments (but this was closing weekend, so it's unfair to be too picky about pace and energy.)

Direction by Phil Perry and Debi Shinnerners made good use of the stage area and quickened the pace of the evening, sending the nine actors scurrying throughout the theatre in truly zany fashion.

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...Nature and Purpose

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red lipstick to the slightly frazzled appearance.

As her husband and sons, Odom, Carrington, Lindsay and McCarr deliver memorably performances that are oddly believable despite their broadly-drawn characters.

As Ronald, Greg Walsh is slightly eerie, yet somehow comforting — in other words, perfect in his role as an agent of God.

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Announcements

Looking for a significant other? TGSP personal guide. SASE $1 to P.O. Box 82086, Chattanooga, TN 37411.

New lesbian and gay community meeting space needs interior decoration: chairs, lamps, tables, artwork, mirrors, bookshelves, rugs, ceiling fans. New or used. Nashville. Call GALLIP (615) 297-0008.

WANTER: Reliable, hardworking self-starters in Knoxville, Nashville and Memphis for commissioned ad sales. Great part-time, high-pay work for students, etc. (615) 327-Dare.

WANTER: Reliable and energetic people to help deliver Dare in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis, Nashville, and the Tri-Cities. Write Dare, Box 40,422, Nashville, 37204 or phone (615) 327-Dare.

LONG HOURS. HARD WORK. LOW PAY. Dare is accepting applications from writers in Chattanooga, Clarksville, Jackson, Knoxville, Memphis, Murfreesboro, Nashville, the Tri-cities and around Tennesse. Learn community-oriented journalism, and be one of the best. Dare, Box 40,422, Nashville, 37204 or phone (615) 327-Dare.

Real Estate

Commercial bldg over 1800 sq. ft, lot size 32' x 85', currently being appraised. Kathy Douglas, TEAM Realty & Auction, Nashville, (615) 229-2189 or 333-3330.

One-bedroom apt, Inglenook area, Nashville. $335/month, all utilities furnished. Six month lease, deposit required. (615) 226-7124.


Responsibly male wanted to share lg 3BR, 2BA apt, Green Hills area. $250/mo + 1/2 utils. Nashville. (615) 292-6833. Lvs msg.

Personal

Dear Patrick: I know our next anniversary isn't until next June, but Happy Anniversary. I forgive you for being such a clod and breaking my priceless and irreplaceable Russian plate. Now get back to pasting possum labels on those soup cans.

Katie, Katie, '80s Lady, who are you in love with now? We must get together and share war stories about uh, the Village Square and that frock you bought for the Military Ball.

Welcome to the Volunteer State, Joe. Barbara Manon, founder of the Institute for the Study of American Religion, for his new book THE CHURCHES SPEAK ON AIDS.

I really love the trio album, with Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt. I think Dolly Parton is great. She's definitely her own woman and has really had some good things to say. And k.d. lang is a favorite. Now you know who she comes to for fashion tips.

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Who's between Matt and bice Calvins?

“The southern attitude is that homosexuality is not a condition or sickness but a sin of which (according to evangelical doctrine) anyone is capable.”

— Words of wisdom from the recently-published ENCyclopedia of Southern Culture.

“I thought we’d find a clear division between liberal and conservative on the question of God’s judgment, but evidently all agree that AIDS is so serious that moralizing about it is out of place.”


American congregations, liberal and conservative, almost unanimously dismiss the argument that AIDS is God’s judgment on homosexuals, but they also reject homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle.

— A TENNESSEAN report on a survey conducted by J. Gordon Melton, founder of the Institute for the Study of American Religion, for his new book THE CHURCHES SPEAK ON AIDS.

“I really love the trio album, with Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt. I think Dolly Parton is great. She’s definitely her own woman and has really had some good things to say. And k.d. lang is a favorite. Now you know who she comes to for fashion tips.”

— Paul Phillips, the blond, fair-skinned half of Romanovsky and Phillips, twirling his “pettiest coat from hell” and showing off his Dale Evans-inspired fringed jacket, during an interview with Dare.

“The accused rapist: a drifter from Georgia. The accuser: a 22-year-old woman who was wearing a white lace miniskirt, a green tank top and no underwear on Nov. 6, 1988, when she claimed she was kidnapped at knifepoint from a Fort Lauderdale restaurant parking lot and raped twice. The jury’s verdict last week: not guilty on the ground that she solicited sex. We all feel she asked for it for the way she was dressed," explained jury foreman Roy Diamond.

— From time magazine’s “American Notes” section detailing a Florida jury’s verdict in a rape trial.

Since Zsa Zsa Gabor offended nearly every ethnic and special interest group in Los Angeles County during her trial, we thought she should do deeds that would raise her social consciousness.

“Anwering phones at the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center. (Hello, dahling, it’s Zsa Zsa. If your closet is as crowded as mine, I would come out of there, too.)”

— Paula Monarez, in THE LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS, suggesting community-service work for Zsa Zsa Gabor’s sentencing.

“As Matt Dillon’s underpants.”

— Pop music diva Boy George in answer to the question, “How do you want to be reincarnated?” Huh-huh.

“Dear Abby: I am a 35-year-old male, 6 feet tall, weight 190. I am in excellent physical condition, and I’m told I am very good-looking. I am gay — but that’s not my problem.

“My problem is what to tell people (obviously people who don’t know me very well) when I’m asked, ‘How come an attractive man like you isn’t married?’

“If I say (which I have)’I guess maybe I just haven’t met the right person yet,’ they say, ‘Oh, have I got a girl for you?”

“Obviously, I am not interested in meeting the girl they have in mind, and I don’t want to go through that routine of taking a phone number, or giving anybody mine.

“Any suggestions? I’m not a very good liar.

— Dear Gary: Since you’re basically a truthful person — how about this: ‘I appreciate your interest, but I’m gay.’ They will probably think you’re kidding — even though there’s a 10% chance that you’re kidding on the square.”

— A letter to — and an answer from — advice maven Abigail Van Buren, in her syndicated column. Abby seems to be on the right track. But what’s Gary’s address and phone number? We have the perfect boy for him.

“Legal sanction of same-sex couples is a dynamic issue. I’d like to know how you, my readers, feel about it. Are you for it or against it?”

— Ann Landers, advice doyenne and twin sister to Abigail Van Buren, in response to a writer’s letter, testing the dangerous waters about same-sex unions before taking sides on the issue. In order to let her know how you feel about same-sex marriages — and to head off the conservatives and homophobes at the pass — you may write Landers at: THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611.

“Poverty and religion, both so prevalent in southern life, have molded homosexuality and society’s reaction to it. The sexual attitudes of the poorer classes result both in widespread bisexual experimentation and in a violent reaction against such behavior.”

— More wisdom from the ENCyclopedia of Southern Culture.