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Jackson, on a nationwide tour, it
Commission issues
by

by

Deficiency Syndrome decided in December to give
August. In fact, the Commission will continue to bring
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wait until our statutes required annual report next
August. In fact, the Commission will continue to bring
these urgent matters to your attention and the attention of
Congress as we hear from the experts about the HIV
epidemic and what is needed to respond to it."
Here are some excerpts from that report:
“..."The message from the experts was clear and alarm-
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• There is a dangerous, perhaps even growing, com-
placency in our country toward an epidemic that many
people want to believe is over.
• Far from over, the epidemic is reaching crisis pro-
portions among the young, the poor, women and many
minority communities. In fact, the 1990’s will be much
worse than the 1980’s.
• The link between drug use and HIV infection must

• continued on page 4

Commission issues first report to Bush
Makes recommendations on AIDS
by JACKI MOSS
Staff Writer

The National Commission on Acquired Immune
Deficiency Syndrome decided in December to give
President Bush its first report early because, “The
testimony...on health care and financing was so com-
pelling, we felt it was vital to write you now, rather than
wait until our statutes required annual report next
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minority communities. In fact, the 1990’s will be much
worse than the 1980’s.
• The link between drug use and HIV infection must

• continued on page 4

Dreams of summer fun end in tragedy
Lover vows to find murderer of Aaron Overstreet
by JEFF ELLIS
Editor ©1990 Pyramid Light and Power

With his favorite singer, Janet
Jackson, on a nationwide tour, it
looked as if summer 1990 was going to
be an exciting time for 21-year-
old Aaron Overstreet who, for the
past several weeks, had been saving
money to pay off the ticket
scammers.
But his dream of attending a
concert was shattered earlier this
month when a still-unknown assail-
ant — or assailants — brutally mur-
dered Aaron Overstreet and, as his
lover David Adams put it, “threw
him in the lake like so much trash.”

Overstreet’s body was discovered
in Percy Priest Lake early
Monday morning, March 5, by a
fisher who was on vacation from his
job as a food stocker at Kroger. The
blond, blue-eyed Overstreet had
been stabbed and shot several
times, according to the police
report, and had been dead for more
than 24 hours when his body was
found. The young man had been
missing for seven days.

Murder squad detective Mike
Smith says police still have no sus-
pects, but are continuing to ask
questions of Aaron Overstreet’s
family and friends.

Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt, a documentary film about
the NAMES Project National AIDS Memorial Quilt, has been
nominated for an Oscar for best feature documentary. This week,
Flynn Malone reviews the film: Persistence of Vision, page 7. —
DARE FILE PHOTO

GALAPAC calls for more
Lobbies for more AIDS money
by JACKI MOSS
Staff Writer

The Gay and Lesbian Association
Political Action Committee, GALA-
PAC, recently called for national
organizations to mobilize their
members in a phone lobby effort to
demand an increase in the federal

The federal budget is to be voted
on by Congress in April, and ac-
garding to GALAPAC officials, Rich-
ard Darman, director of the federal
Office of Management and Budget
has recommended no increase in
AIDS funding for the upcoming
budget. GALAPAC said that AIDS
cases are expected to rise between
60% and 50% in the next year, while
the Bush administration has re-
quested a 7.5% increase in funding
for the same time period, in direct
conflict with the National Commis-
ion on Acquired Immune Defi-
 ciency Syndrome’s report calling
for immediate and urgent financial
and organizational responses to the
epidemic. Current funding is about
$1.6 billion and is expected to go
to only $1.72 billion in the face of a
growing epidemic.

“We are asking every person who
attended the National March on
Washington in 1987 to phone both
their Senators, their Congressper-
son and the White House to de-
mand an increase in AIDS funding,
as well as early access to the drug
ddI, which has proved to be both
safe and effective against AIDS, said
GALAPAC chair Howard Armis-
tead. “A two or three minute phone
call to Washington is cheap, easy
and effective. Every single person
who is HIV positive or has a friend
who is owes it to themselves to pick
up the phone and call the Capitol
immediately.

“Public pressure does get results
in Washington, but politicians and
bureaucrats fail to respond when
they don’t hear that demand loud
and clear, and in significant num-
bers,” Armstead said.

Armstead said that the gay com-
munity cannot allow this to be the
“second Republican administration
to sleep through the call to arms in
the War Against AIDS. With more
than a million and a half HIV posi-
tive people in this country alone,
more lives are at stake than all the
lives lost in wars in the 200 years of
this nation’s history, yet there is still
no sense of urgency demonstrated
by the administration. It’s time to
wake up this President to the urgent
need for foresighted leadership on
the issue,” said Armstead.
GALAPAC materials call phone

• continued on page 4

Aaron Overstreet

For David Adams, the round of
questions continues: Where had
Aaron been since February 26?
What became of his clothes and
jewelry? Why was the car Aaron
was driving — found by police at
Dover Glen apartments on Tuesday,
March 6 — not discovered by
Adams himself when he searched
the parking lot the day before?
And, perhaps the most difficult
question that continues to haunt
Adams: What could have prompted
such a brutal attack?

But as persistent as the questions
continue:

• continued on page 4

Inside Dare

• Queer art: Artist Darlene Shadden
looks for glamour, Centerpiece, page 7.

• Out of the shadows: Behind the scenes at The Shadow Box, page 10.

• Loose lips:
At last! News in Newsweek, page 15.
**Disappearance Fear**

**Friday, March 16**

**Cassett** - DISAPPEAR FEAR. Benefit for Knoxville Women's Shelter. At Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church, 3219 Kingston Pike, Knoxville. 8pm. Info (615) 523-3888.

**Saturday, March 17**


**Church, 3219 Kingston Pike, Knoxville. Bpm. Info (615) 269-6778.**

**CLARKSVILLE**

**Monday**

**CLARKSVILLE CARES** Support group for HIV+, ARC, AIDS, family & partners. 1st & 3rd Mondays only. 3pm. Info (615) 648-7730.

**Thursday**

**OSGL Austin Peay State University Organization for Support of Gay & Lesbians, group for lesbians and gay men.** Info (615) 523-AIDS.

**CLARKSVILLE CARES** Support group for HIV+, ARC, AIDS, family & partners. 1st & 3rd Mondays only. 3pm. Info (615) 648-7730.

**Sunday**

**Lesbian & Gay CoDA** Co-Dependents Anonymous. Reflections, Harrison. 12:30pm. Info (615) 967-8044.

**Metropolitan Community Church** Worship service, 3224 Navajo Dr. 6:30pm.

**KNOXVILLE**

**Monday**

**Open meeting, Unitarian Church, 3224 Navajo Dr. 6:30pm.**

**Sunday**

**Lesbian & Gay CoDA** Co-Dependents Anonymous. Reflections, Harrison. 12:30pm. Info (615) 967-8044.

**Metropolitan Community Church** Worship service, 3224 Navajo Dr. 6:30pm.

**MURFREESBORO**

**Friday**

**MTSU Lambda** Support group for lesbian and gay students, faculty, staff and alumni of Middle Tennessee State University. 6pm. Info (615) 865-9749.

**NASHVILLE**

**Monday**

**Lambda Group** Closed Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for gay men and lesbians, Unitarian Church. 8pm. Info (615) 648-7730.

**Sunday**

**Agape New Life Church** Sunday School, 9:30am. Worship services, 11am & 7pm. Info (615) 276-1873.

**Knoxville**

**Monday**

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

**Gay & Lesbian Student Union/UK** Weekly meeting, 6pm. Info (615) 595-8066.

**Wednesdays**

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

**Susanne kickoff** Music City Sports Association softball league. Games begin at Whitfield Park, Nashville, 7pm. Info (615) 883-4833.

**Sunday, April 1**

**Consciousness Raising** Black & White Men Together / Memphis. 7:30pm. Info (901) 726-1461.

**Memphis**

**Monday**

**Gay Alternative Radio Show, WEVL-FM 90.5, 5:30pm.**

**Memphis Gay Caucus** Book discussion, 1st Monday, 6pm. Memphis Public Library, Peabody & Macleod. Info (901) 726-4932.

**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. 6pm. Info (901) 727-9549.

**Wednesdays**

**Agape New Life Church** Bible study. 7pm. Info (901) 726-1461.

**Thursday**

**P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gay) Support group, St. John's Episcopal Church, 322 S Green. 1st Thursday of the month. Info (901) 726-9549.**

**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30pm. Info (901) 727-9549.

**Into the Light Women's Self-Help Group** Open meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. 6pm. Info (901) 727-9549.

**Friday**

**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30pm & 10pm. Info (901) 727-9549.

**Saturday**


**Murfreesboro**

**Friday**

**MTSU Lambda** Support group for lesbian and gay students, faculty, staff and alumni of Middle Tennessee State University. 6pm. Info (615) 865-9749.

**Saturday**

**Twisted Sisters (ACOA)** Open meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30pm & 10pm. Info (901) 727-9549.

**Sunday**

**Agape New Life Church** Sunday School, 9:30am. Worship services, 11am & 7pm. Info (615) 276-1873.


**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. 6pm. Info (901) 727-9549.

**Murfreesboro**

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**Sunday**

**Agape New Life Church** Bible study. 7pm. Info (901) 726-1461.

**Just like clockwork**

**Chattanooga**

**Mondays**

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

**Thursdays**

**P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gay) Support group, St. John's Episcopal Church, 322 S Green. 1st Thursday of the month. Info (901) 726-4932.**

**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30pm. Info (901) 727-9549.

**Fridays**

**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30pm & 10pm. Info (901) 727-9549.

**Saturday**


**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. 6pm. Info (901) 727-9549.

**Sunday**

**Agape New Life Church** Sunday School, 9:30am. Worship services, 11am & 7pm. Info (615) 276-1873.


**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting. Memphis Lambda Center. 6pm. Info (901) 727-9549.

**Monday, April 2**

**Consciousness Raising** Black & White Men Together / Memphis. 7:30pm. Info (901) 726-1461.

**Tri-Cities**

**Tuesdays**

**LETA** Lesbians of East Tennessee & Surrounding Areas social / support group. 1st & 3rd Tues only. Info Box 905 Mountain Home, TN 37674.

**Support Group** Tri-Cities AIDS Project (TAP). For caregivers / families of PWAs, HIV+ and ARC, 6:30pm and 4th 5pm Tuesdays only. Info (615) 926-6101 or 753-9647.

**Thursdays**

**Support Group** Appalachian AIDS Coalition. For PWAs, ARC, and HIV+ in southwest Virginia, including Bristol, TN. 3rd Thursday only. Info (703) 985-0131.
Vance Roger and Matthew Presley are cast in the Lollipop Guild's production of Den-Nicholas Smith's new drama BATTLE SCARS, an examination of the leather lifestyle, to be presented at Memphis' Theatre Works March 18-20. — Same File Photo

Memphis

New gay drama premieres

BATTLE SCARS, a new drama by Memphis playwright DenNicholas Smith premieres at Theatre Works March 18-20. Vincent Astor directs Matt Presley, Vance Reger, Kerrel Ard and the playwright himself in an examination of the relationship between lovers and among friends, all of whom are into, or want to be into, leather.

The play deals with trying to understand the leather lifestyle, the misunderstandings and conflicts which often arise between those who do and those who don't, and the effect all this has on the characters' relationships with each other.

The play contains some "graphic depiction" and strong language. BATTLE SCARS is sponsored by a roster of Memphis lesbian/gay groups and individuals including Wings, Women of Leather, Memphis Gay and Lesbian Center and Linda Vickers. Ticket prices are $5 and are available at all TicketMaster locations. VISA/Mastercard orders call (615) 355-3600. Student discounts are available for more information call (615) 355-3600.

Copello to speak to GALLSA

Gene Copello, president of the International Society for AIDS Education, director of the Vanderbilt AIDS Project and assistant professor of medical ethics at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, will be speaking on AIDS education and prevention in the Alexander Room at the Vanderbilt University School of Law, Thursday, March 22, 12-1 p.m. Sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Law Students Association at Vanderbilt's Law School, Copello's speech will address the topic of AIDS as a major global health emergency.

Copello's presentation will address the specialty areas of AIDS education and prevention and will review current approaches and methods in the context of meeting the challenges posed by changing social, economic and institutional environments and by changing communicating and information technologies.

Nashville

JCC's Shalom Theatre to

stage 'A Shyana Maidel'

"A powerful, haunting, and deeply affecting portrait of a family, which conveys the aftermath of the Holocaust through a poignant, imaginatively conceived examination of one divided family's experience", A SHYANA MAIDEL features a cast of veteran actors in the production set for the Jewish Community Theatre Center.

The play, which will be Shalom Theatre's first drama, features a company assembled by Mary Louise Smith (also manager for Circle Players), who directs the play.

The cast includes Linda Truley and Julia Pennington, both Circle Player veterans. Bryan Cahen, Ed Brown and Eva Saks also appear.

A SHYANA MAIDEL opens Saturday, March 24 at 8:00 p.m. with continuing performances March 25, 2:00 p.m.; March 29, 8:00 p.m. and April 1, 2:00 p.m. Tickets from $4-$8 on sale at JCC, 801 Percy Warner Boulevard. For tickets and reservations call (615) 356-7170.

Nashville Symphony pays tribute to Gershwin

A "Glorious Gershwin" weekend, set for March 30-31, will pay tribute to the genius of George Gershwin, the 20th century American composer, as part of the Nashville Symphony's Sovran Bank POPS concert series.

Critically acclaimed classical pianist Lorin Hollander, who debuted in Carnegie Hall at age 11 and has performed with every major orchestra in the world, is the featured guest artist. Hollander appears regularly on network/public TV and was the subject of Public Television's Emmy nominated "Outstanding Performer in a Weekly Series".

Kenneth Schermerhorn will conduct the Nashville Symphony's two performances which are scheduled for 8:00 p.m. at TPAC's Jackson Hall. Tickets are $12 - $25 and are available at all TicketMaster locations. VISA/Mastercard orders call (615) 745-2787 or toll free 10800 333-4849. Student discounts are available. For more information call (615) 329-3033.

Harvey's Cleaning Service

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PARKWAY REAL ESTATE

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Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Judy Eron, LCSW

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

David's Cleaning

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

David's Cleaning

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

PARKWAY REAL ESTATE
The curtain has risen on a great new production.

Nashville's Onstage Monthly
Free! Ask for it at your theatre or bookstore.

Juanita's
BAR
ST. PATRICK’S DAY PARTY
Saturday, March 17 • 25¢ Green Draft • 6 pm – 9 pm
POOL TOURNAMENT Monday, March 26 • $3 entrance fee
  Sunday 25¢ draft 4 pm – 8 pm
  Monday $2.50 draft beer pitchers all day
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

Michael's
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...Commission
❖ continued from page 1
be acknowledged and addressed in any
national drug strategy.
• There is no national plan for helping an
already faltering health care system deal with
the impact of the HIV epidemic.
• Recent years have seen considerable ad­
  vances in the development of new HIV-re­
  lated drugs, including the prospect of treating
  HIV infection before symptoms develop.
• But scientific breakthroughs mean little
  unless the health care system can incorporate
  them and make them accessible to people in
  need.
• The belief that Medicaid will pay for the
  health care needs of the growing number of
  low income people with HIV infection and
  AIDS is, as one expert witness told the Com­
  mission, a ‘Medicaid fantasy’.
• According to a 1987 Hospital AIDS survey,
  almost one quarter of all AIDS patients have
  no form of insurance, private or public.
• Less than 20% of the persons with AIDS
  treated in Southern hospitals were covered by
  Medicaid, compared with 59% in the North­
  east and 44% nationwide.
• ‘For the medically disenfranchised, there is
  no access to a system of care. For those who
  have no doctor, no clinic, no means of pay­
  ment, access to health care services is most
  often through the emergency room door of
  one of the few hospitals in the community
  that treats people with HIV infection and
  AIDS.
• ‘Five percent of the nation’s hospitals treat
  50% of the people with AIDS. For those who
  are covered by Medicaid, access to care is best
  than those who have no insurance at
  all. However, the obstacles to care under
  Medicaid funding can be insurmountable for
  many.
• ‘One obstacle is the wide variation among
  states in Medicaid eligibility and scope of
  benefits. The Food and Drug Administration
  (FDA), under considerable public pressure,
  has struggled with mechanisms to speed new
  drugs to the market. Yet there is no require­
  ment that Medicaid make even life­prolong­
  ing drugs such as zidovudine (AZT) avail­
  able...
• ‘In summary, a series of problems have resulted in a health care system singularly
  unresponsive to the needs of HIV infected
  people: the initial appearance of HIV infec­
  tion and AIDS in groups often shunned by the
  larger society - gay men, the poor, minorities,
  and intravenous drug users - encouraged a
  slow response, a gross lack of training sup­
  port for primary care physicians to treat
  people with HIV infection and AIDS, and
  serious disincentives for physicians who take
  Medicaid patients and, perhaps, poor people
  in general.’
• The Commission listed in the report recom­
  mendations to the President:
  • First, frank recognition that a crisis situ­
  ation exists in many cities that will require
  extraordinary measures to overcome. Signifi­
  cant changes must be made not only in our
  health care system but in how we think about
  the system and the people it is designed to
  serve. As one witness told the Commission, it
  can no longer be ‘business as usual’.
  • Second, the creation of a flexible, patient­
  oriented, comprehensive system of care, to
  include linking hospital, ambulatory, resident­
  tial and home care. Primary care physicians
  must be central to such a system.
  • ‘But if primary care doctors are to care for
  patients with HIV infection and AIDS, they
  need the financial, social and institutional
  support to assist them in managing compli­
  cated patients.
  • Third, consideration of the creation of regional centers or networks of care, perhaps
  using the already existing regionalized hemor­
  philia treatment program as a model.
• ‘These centers would not serve as a re­
  placement for the care provided by primary
  care physicians, but would provide backup
  and consultation to help strengthen commu­
  nity based primary care.
• ‘Fourth, creating units which can treat pa­
  tients who have both HIV infection and drug
  addiction. The availability of drug treatment
  on request is essential for responding to the
  combined HIV and drug epidemic that imper­
  sors not only drug users but also their sexual
  partners and children.
• ‘Fifth, provide comprehensive health care
  services under one roof. Fragmented services
  create additional barriers to needed health
  care. Often mothers will seek health care
  services needed for their babies but are not
  able to then gain access to care for them­
  selves.
• ‘Health care services for women and chil­
  dren need to be provided in one place. For the
  homeless, housing and health care need to go
  hand-in-hand, this is true not only for those
  who are homeless today but for those who
  will become homeless tomorrow because of
  the HIV epidemic.’
• The Commission estimated the cost of their
  recommendations for direct medical care for
  people with AIDS in 1991 as ranging from $2.5
  to $15.1 billion. The report said, ‘These esti­
  mates represent a small fraction of the total
  health care costs for the nation - from less than
  one to slightly more than three percent. We
  estimate must be prepared to make these ex­
  penditures.’
• Although the Commission praised private
  sector voluntary AIDS service organizations
  saying they have been all important in man­
  aging the HIV epidemic to date,
• ‘We must move swiftly to bring the missing
  players to the table...this includes a greater
  presence of our federal, state and local gov­
  ernments in terms of leadership, financing
  and service delivery.
• It includes the support and cooperation of
  the insurance industry, employers, physi­
  cians and other medical providers and last,
  but profit-wise not least, the pharmaceutical
  industry as well.’
❖

...GALAPAC
❖ continued from page 1
lobbying simple. The group recommends
the following rules: a) be prepared, plan
what you want to say based on facts and
reason; b) be polite; and c) be brief.
According to GALAPAC, calling one’s own
representatives is most effective. Citizens may
call the Capitol switchboards at (202) 224­
3121 for the Senate, and (202) 225-3121 for
the House. They should ask for their Congress­
person and Senators by name and state. The
number of the White House Comment Office
is (202) 456-7639.
Cross Country

The Iowa Supreme Court recently rejected a trial court's order that a gay father be restricted to visitation with his children only so long as "no unrelated adult" is present.

Support the AIDS vaccine effort.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR AIDS VACCINE EVALUATIONS

Don't Be Alone!

We've found new friends and lovers for hundreds of Tennessee men using proven low-cost computer matching methods. Call for information on how we can help you too!

St. Petersburg

AGA to hold 20th annual national convention


AGA's Special Session will feature two long time gay activists and the founders of AGA, Don Sanders of Houston, Texas, and Dominic Florio of New York City.

American Gay Atheists, Inc., is a non-profit, non-political, educational organization of gay and lesbian atheists dedicated to upholding the First Amendment principle of absolute separation between church and state.

Registration for the Convention is $65. For information write AGA, PO Box 66711, Houston, Texas, 77266-6711, or call (713) 862-3285.

Campbellsville

Man sentenced to 50 years for attack on victim

A white man who tried to murder a black man he believed was gay by beating him with a bumper jack, locking him in a car trunk with a live snapping turtle and then attempting to burn the car, was sentenced to 50 years in prison last month by a Campbellsville, Kentucky. jury.

A second suspect charged in the attack is undergoing psychiatric evaluation and has not stood trial.

The victim, Kirk Nash, 21, was assaulted by Rer. Melton, 23, and allegedly by Ricky Johnson, 19. According to trial testimony, Melton and Johnson turned on Nash after he made sexual advances toward them while they were riding around in Nash's car drinking.

Boise

HIV+ gay man gets life sentence for molestation

An HIV-positive gay man was sentenced to life imprisonment without possibility of parole in January for the molestation of a 15-year-old boy.

The sentence given to George Herbert Lewis, 52, is harsher than many given for first-degree murder in Idaho, which does not have a minimum mandatory sentence for child molestation.

Because Lewis is HIV-positive, the local Ada County prosecutor's office initially filed charges against him for deliberately exposing an unsuspecting person to the virus, a crime in Idaho.

Lewis was the first person charged under the law.

compiled by KAREN MATHIS
Staff Writer

Trenton, N.J.

Umpierre receives lifetime achievement award

Luz Maria Umpierre, a Puerto Rican poet and critic, will receive a lifetime achievement award from the Coalition of Gay and Lesbian Organizations at a banquet to be held April 7.

Umpierre has filed charges against Rutgers University based on discrimination on the basis of sex and natural origin. After alleging that she had been discriminated against when she applied for the position of chair of the department of Caribbean studies, Umpierre was banned from teaching for nine months pending a psychiatric evaluation but was reinstated to her position as Associate Professor with tenure upon evidence that she suffered no mental illness.

However, as further retaliatory measures, her offices were removed from her department upon her reinstatement. Umpierre also claimed that then-dean of the college, Tilden Edelstein, held a meeting with her colleagues asking that Umpierre not be spoken to on campus.

Umpierre eventually resigned her position to accept the chair of modern languages and folklore at Western Kentucky University.

Washington, D.C.

Senate rejects Armstrong's amendment

Earlier this month the U.S. Senate rejected Senator William Armstrong's (R-Colo.) amendment to the Human Rights Ordinance which had allowed organizations in the District of Columbia to bar any gay man or lesbian from serving as a "role model, mentor or companion to any minor."

The victory represents the second time in less than a month that the Senate sided with the gay and lesbian community, the first being the defeat of Jesse Helms' (R-N.C.) amendment to the federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act.

Armstrong said that the law is being "force Big Brothers and other similar organizations to admit homosexuals into their programs as counselors and role models."

He stated that the District of Columbia "should not be able to impose a requirement that these organizations accept people who have not historically been deemed suitable for that kind of work."

Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) devised the strategy and led the floor fight that defeated the amendment. Kennedy offered alternative language that would allow organizations to deny positions to heterosexuals, gays and bisexuals who have been charged or convicted of sexual offenses with minors.

Des Moines

Iowa Supreme Court rejects trial court order

The Iowa Supreme Court recently rejected a trial court's order that a gay father be restricted to visitation with his children only so long as "no unrelated adult" is present.

In lifting the restriction, the court stated that "this unusual provision was obviously imposed on account of Michael's homosexual lifestyle."

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR AIDS VACCINE EVALUATIONS

Volunteers must not have had a smallpox vaccination. Nashville.

For more information call (615) 343-AIDS

Support the AIDS vaccine effort.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR AIDS VACCINE EVALUATIONS
...Aaron Overstreet

Continued from page 1

Instead, Aaron Overstreet became something of a homebody, doing domestic things like making dinner or doing the laundry. But he still made time for his friends who were, according to Adams, "his life."

On Monday, February 26, the last day that Adams saw his lover, "he seemed happier than he'd ever been before."

"Late that night, he was going over to Dover Glen, to the old apartment, to get a load of stuff we had left there."

"He didn't come back."

Apparently, during that trip back to their old apartment, something happened that prevented Overstreet from returning home. But Adams has no idea what that chain of events is.

"There had been times — several months before — when Aaron would go out late, until the bars closed. But he hadn't done that in a long time. When he wasn't home by 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, I knew something was wrong," Adams says.

"I called everyone I could think of, his friends, his family, his stepmother, his mother in Florida."

Aaron's family's reaction, Adams claims, was disinterested: "We haven't heard from him and don't know where he is. He's done this all his life, just disappear for a while with no word."

Aaron's friends, however, had a markedly different reaction: "They all said he wouldn't have done anything like that. He was too happy."

"I just thought he had left me," Adams said. But Adams had taken nothing with him, a fact that seemed to dispel the abandonment theory.

Overstreet had planned to spend the weekend of March 3 with his father or sister. When Adams called Overstreet's father, Aaron was not there, nor was he with his sister.

Finally, Adams reported his lover missing to the police.

Then in the early morning hours of Monday, March 6, a Metro police detective called with questions about Aaron's friends and habits.

Soon after that came the television reports that a young man's body had been found in Percy Priest Lake.

Adams was called to the Criminal Justice Center. Detectives still could not confirm that the body found in the lake was indeed that of Aaron Overstreet, although Adams says one detective let slip that Aaron was dead.

Eventually, forensic experts, using fingerprints obtained when Overstreet was arrested for driving without a license, identified the body. Aaron Overstreet had been shot four times and stabbed in the chest.

Early media reports said he appeared to have been beaten, his body covered with welts. But an undertaker told Adams the welts were actually slashes from a knife.

"He said they had to put rubber gloves on Aaron's hands because they were slashed. He said it looked like Aaron had tried to defend himself," Adams says, his voice breaking slightly.

"He said he didn't see how one person could have done all of that."

The very real horrors of Aaron's violent death continue to haunt Adams, the grieving process exacerbated by the mysterious circumstances of the event and the callous attitudes of Overstreet's family toward Adams during the funeral.

"I took clothes to the funeral home for Aaron to be dressed in, but his family wouldn't let them be used because they had never seen him in them," he says.

While at the funeral home, Adams' mother approached Adams and demanded: "I want you to tell me everything you know about my son."

"I'm not sure what all I told her. I guess I just rambled on for a while. I said, 'I tried to tell you he was missing and no one would listen.'"

She finally got upset and walked off. Then my mother came and sat with me," Adams remembers.

Then Aaron's mother returned: "I want you to leave and I want you to leave now."

Adams and his mother left the funeral home, followed into the parking lot by Aaron's father and mother.

His father, obviously grief-stricken, told Adams: "I want you to tell all of his friends that I'm going to find who did this. I don't care how long it takes, if it's the last thing I do, I'm going to find who did this and take care of them."

"You'll have to get to them before I do," Adams replied.

On Thursday, March 8, the morning Aaron Overstreet was buried, his lover — told he was not welcome at the funeral — had to sneak into the back of the sanctuary to pay his last respects.

"No one knew I was there except for Aaron's closest friends."

"I had gone to the funeral home the night before, after his family had left. I guess it was around 2 a.m., and I talked to him. I knew it sounds silly, but I just stood there and talked to him for about three hours," Adams says, tears welling in his eyes.

"Before it was just a box with a picture on top of it. But then I finally accepted the fact that he really was dead."

"He's better now that I've gotten to see him. I talked it out with him.

"There's just no sense doing someone like that — he had been shot at least four times and stabbed and slashed with a knife.

"If he had robbed someone or was doing dope, there still wouldn't be any reason to do him that way."

"I just want to find out what happened. I don't care if he was screwing around or anything like that, I've just got to know what happened and why.

"Whatever it takes, whatever I have to do, I've got to just find out who did it," Adams says, his voice heavy with emotion.

Adams is offering a personal $1,000 reward to anyone with information leading to the arrest of the person or persons responsible for the death of Aaron Overstreet.

He's also searching for someone, anyone, who might have some idea of how Aaron spent that fateful Monday night in February.

"Ever since he left that night, the porch light's been on, and all the lights in the house have been on, waiting for him to come home," Adams says.

"I'm still waiting for him to come in with that little puppy dog look on his face like he's sorry, like he knows he should have called."

But the door never opens, the phone never rings. Aaron Overstreet won't be coming home.
The common denominator

COMMON THREADS: STORIES FROM THE QUILT.

reviewed by FLINNE MALONE
Staff Writer

It's difficult to persuade people to watch a film about death, but I am attempting to do just that. Please look for COMMON THREADS: STORIES FROM THE QUILT, and when you find it, see it and take someone with you.

It's nominated for an Academy Award for best feature documentary. I don't know what it's up against, but blindly I hope it wins. It's up against, but blindly I hope it wins because it makes perfectly clear the ripples of our common denominator.

best feature documentary. I don't know what it's up against, but blindly I hope it wins so that more people will see it.

It is directed by Robert Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman. Epstein won an Oscar (with Richard Schmierer) for the unparalleled times of Harvey Milk. He also was a member of the Mariposa Film Group that produced WORD. Friedman worked on the distinguished, award winning NICK MAZZUCA: BIOGRAPHY OF AN ATOMIC VET. COMMON THREADS is narrated by Dustin Hoffman, and the music is by Bobby McFerrin.

With such a title, you would be correct to assume that this is a film about AIDS. It is also a film that must find its mainstream audience because it makes perfectly clear the ripples of so much unattended death. It features the stories of, yes, gay men (one the founder of the Gay Games), an IV drug user and a hemophiliac - the classic high risk groups, and it breaks down the stereotypes.

It is a study of, yes, gay men (one the founder of the Gay Games), an IV drug user and a hemophiliac - the classic high risk groups, but it breaks down the stereotypes.

Using the style so refined in HARVEY MILK, the filmmakers weave the various stories told chiefly in memorial retrospective by members of their families, traditional and otherwise. Woven into this tapestry are network and local news clips, stills, home movie footage, all seamlessly edited against and with an undercurrent pulse or McFerrin's haunting chant-like scat, accompanied by synthesizer and the ten member Voicestra.

As in Randy Shilts' landmark book, and the band played on, there is here, too, a yearly silent statistical toll of lives literally wasted away. Intercut is footage of the underlying fabric of the quilt of the NAMES Project, far too many memorials to individuals.

"We wanted to make a film...where the audience could shape the ideas for themselves...We hoped that people would cry, be moved by it and become angry - when people identify with the characters, that's when the story, and the issues, become important to them."

These words were spoken about HARVEY MILK, but they could certainly apply to COMMON THREADS. The strength of any film starts in the subjects, and these were well chosen. There's something chilling and challenging about a 12-year-old speaking in silhouette on a news cast to protect his identity, saying, "We didn't come from a different planet. We're still the same human beings they are." Yes.

The interviews are set in a soft key light that leaves room for the shadows, and that is appropriate for this film that is filled with intimacies remembered often in smiles and, only sometimes, in tears. What the light and shadow reveal is the deep beauty of real and difficult human emotion. This is about death and the individual response of jealousy, anger or retreat, to our inescapable common denominator.

If this is a story about disease and death it is also very much a story about healing with a traditional medicine: quilting and "the connection of souls." Quilts are so close to life itself, communal creation, daily rest and warmth, blood, seed, sickness, tears and comfort all pressed into soft fabric that speaks the stories of the people who can speak no longer. The stories are, in some sense, always the same: that we're human, by God, that our threads are common in both the basic and the united sense.

Please, please see COMMON THREADS. Yes, it's sad. You might cry, but have the guts to look, to feel, to stay human, to stay alive. Be challenged to work for a time "when we can stop adding panels to the quilt."

Editor's note: Profits from COMMON THREADS will be donated to the NAMES Project. Videotapes are available for personal use only for $4.95 plus shipping. For more information contact Real Video Limited in Los Angeles at (213) 652-8000.
When Darlene Shadden talks about her work, her eyes light up, her voice becomes excited, her actions relating her enthusiasm much more effectively than do her words.

She’s one of the best known visual artists in the state, specializing in portraits that seem to capture the face of Tennessee—people of all colors, shapes and sizes pictured in scenes of all description.

Sharing her talents with others, by exhibiting her works in a variety of shows—including shows at the Nashville Art Guild Gallery, the Tennessee Art League Gallery, the Parthenon, and the University Club—and by teaching painting to aspiring artists at the Robertson County Senior Citizens Center in Springfield, Shadden treats her audiences to highly creative, highly personal artistic works.

Her most recent show, opening at Nashville’s Warehouse Two, 2529 Franklin Road, on Thursday, March 15, features a collection of portraits of some of the city’s leading female impersonators.

“I’ve always been intrigued with glamour, fascinated by it,” she says. “And who’s more glamorous than a female impersonator?”

Nurturing the idea of a series of portraits of female impersonators for several months, she one day walked into a store and met someone who could open the doors for her.

“I walked into this store and there was a guy behind the counter who I knew was gay, so I said, ‘Do you know how I could get in touch with some of this city’s best drag queens?’” she relates.

“He said, ‘Well, I’m one,’” answered the entertainer known as Monica Munro.

With that initial contact, Shadden and Munro set about interesting other performers in the project. Eventually, Warehouse Two cast members Bianca Page, Rita Ross, Diana Hutton and Dana
Alexander agreed to take part.
The result? "Queens of the City," a show of pageant-winning female impersonators, glamorous individual portraits that will be unveiled at the Warehouse Two show, along with a "grand finale" portrait of the five cast members.

Shadden couldn't be more pleased with the project: "They were all so sweet. They really opened up to me and let me see their transformations taking place. It was fascinating."

Although she's heterosexual and her five "glamour girls" are gay, Shadden said she was able to cross the imaginary barrier that sometimes exists between artist and subject, resulting in the stunning portraits.
**The Shadow Box**

by JEFF ELLIS

Editor

Death and dying are not subjects easily discussed by most people, because dying somehow challenges our most closely-held beliefs and proves our mortality. When it's considered by a dramatist, all too often, the process of dying is treated with a heavy-handed sensibility, its highly personal truth hidden in a blanket of obtuse words.

For the cast of Circle Players' upcoming production of Michael Cristofer's The Shadow Box (which opens Friday, March 16 for a three-weekend run at Nashville's Tennessee Per-

forming Arts Center's Johnson Theatre), working on a play that deals with the inevitability of death has meant much personal introspection and a growing realization that death is simply a part of life.

Cristofer's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama, first produced on Broadway in 1977, chronicles the hopes, fears and successes of three terminally-ill patients as they live out the remainder of their lives at a hospice.

Because Cristofer never names the disease with which his three protagonists suffer, it is perhaps more relevant in 1990 - the age of AIDS - than when it was first written.

Producer James Ben Stockton says: "This is a celebration of the human spirit."

In director Robert Kiefer's cast are Daniel Luther as Joe, J. Leon Miller as Brian and Janet Coscarelli as Felicity. Portraying the interviewer is L.B. Gaters. In supporting roles are Debi Shinnors and Gabe Sanchez as Joe's wife and son; Rita Frizzell and Mike Norman as Brian's ex-wife Beverly and his lover Mark; and Elizabeth Daniel plays Felicity's daughter Agnes.

"This is just a remarkable show," Stockton says. "I cry at rehearsal every night. But this isn't really a sad show. There is an Indian saying that explains what crying means. If you cry on the outside of your eye, you're crying for joy. If you cry on the inside, you're crying for sadness. With this show, you will cry out of both sides of your eyes."

"It's not a depressing show — even though my character cries through half of the show — it's really a very uplifting show," Norman says.

Cast as Mark, the younger gay lover of a terminally ill man, Norman (heretofore known primarily for his comic roles) says the role is "emotionally draining" and "strikes close to home because I've had a number of friends die of AIDS in the past few years."

Norman says every part in Cristofer's play is important, "every role is tremendous" — "I would play any role in this play, even the women's roles, if I could" — but that the role of Mark is one he's wanted to play since he first read the work some years ago.

"My own ex-husband is dying and I'm dedicating my performance to him," she explains. "We're still very close friends and last September I went to see him — I didn't know if it would be the last time I ever saw him or not — to celebrate the love we shared, the life we shared. My visit with him is much like Beverly's visit to Brian — it's not to mourn death, but to celebrate life."

"This play requires a lot from the actor. It takes everything you have to do this show. You go through all the emotional experiences," she says. "It's a very precious role to me. Some people see Beverly as a slut, but I see her as a very classy person who deals with death as best she can."

Playing Beverly, who's best described as big and brassy, Frizzell says presents more a challenging role — and is certainly more fun. "It's only recently I've started playing roles like this and I now have a monitor inside my head that says, 'is this too big to be real'?"

Reservations for the Circle Players' production of The Shadow Box are (left to right) Rita Frizzell, J. Leon Miller and Mike Norman. — PHOTO BY KEN DALE THOMPSON
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**Persons**
- Dog’s hind leg — I know that you love me — I know that you do — Love P. Willow Tree.
- GF, 29, 5’9” Br/Br, tries of bars, games. Enjoys quiet evening at home, bubble baths for 2, movies, the outdoors. Skis petite femme lady 28-40 who enjoys the same. No drugs. Dare DRAwer 61
- GWM, 61, 170+ lbs, Br/Br-gd-kind, honest. Great sense of humor. Truthful, independent, tried of the games. Liking for same in Tennessee. Photo & letter will get an answer. Dare DRAwer 56

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- GF, 29, 5’9”, Br/Br, tries of bars, games. Enjoys quiet evening at home, bubble baths for 2, movies, the outdoors. Skis petite femme lady 28-40 who enjoys the same. No drugs. Dare DRAwer 61
- GBF looking for very discreet GWF for friendship. Photo or phone number please. Dare DRAwer 60
- GF, 29, 5’9”, Br/Br, tries of bars, games. Enjoys quiet evening at home, bubble baths for 2, movies, the outdoors. Skis petite femme lady 28-40 who enjoys the same. No drugs. Dare DRAwer 61
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**Announcements**
- GF, 38, Br/Br 5’11” ska straight acting buddy friend, next, well groomed like myself fun active weekdays. Any age. Dickson County. I enjoy drives in your area. Dare DRAwer 65
- GWM, 43, 6’, 240 lb, hairy, into reading, music, films, sitcoms, movies. Loves to laugh and cry, sunsets, sunrises, rainstorms and rainbows. Warm evenings on a slow-moving train. Dare DRAwer 68
- GF, 43, 6’, 240 lb, hairy, into reading, music, films, sitcoms, movies. Loves to laugh and cry, sunsets, sunrises, rainstorms and rainbows. Warm evenings on a slow-moving train. Dare DRAwer 68
- GWM, 34, 5’10”, 155 lbs, Br/Br, straight, upper-class, button-down/mack-type professional. Not into gay scene. Enjoys movies, travel, music, some sports. Sks similar GWM 28-37 for friend / possible relationship. Dare DRAwer 66.
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- GBF looking for very discreet GWF for friendship. Photo or phone number please. Dare DRAwer 60
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GODSPELL is an spirited blend of entertainment, featuring a top-notch cast in the Chaffin's Barn stage area (great set designed by Bouson and John Chaffin, with costumes by Dianne Malkin on the drums and Joey Green on guitar, it's one of the best musicals of the season.

Frankly, I'd sit in the rain to see this show perform!

But to be quite honest, the show has never appealed to me as a show: I've always considered it too churchy for my tastes.

However, thanks to Bouson's imaginative staging that makes grand use of the Chaffin's Barn stage area, the musical succeeds superbly thanks to Bouson's splendid direction and thoroughly delightful cast.

The show is sweetly compassionate, ready with a quick smile and comforting in his authority. Correll's Jesus is a strong, forthright individual who is no one's patsy.

Bouson, himself, appears in the dual roles of John and Judas, and is perfectly chilling during the denouement that occurs during the Last Supper.

Supporting Correll and Bouson are eight other performers who are uniformly entertaining: Katie Gladfelter, sultry and provocative singing "Turn Back O Man" and right on the money with evangelistic fervor in another scene; David Biddison, his voice sweet and plaintive, his acting funny; Warren Gore, somewhat overshadowed by the others, but still memorable; Susan Hall, her voice rich with emotion despite her lack of power; Brian Beach, truly electrifying (with the entire company) on "We Beseech Thee"; Valerie Green, her singing and comic timing superb, someone we'd love to see again; and the inimitable Su Hyatt, a major star just waiting to happen.

With the musical accompaniment of musical director Jamy Green on the piano, Rick Malkin on the drums and Joey Green on guitar, it's one of the best musicals of the season.

Answers to the Dare 100th issue trivia quiz

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Everybody's talking...

"At the end of the '60s, most gay[s] thought of themselves as outsiders. I don't think that gays ever thought they could ever influence that system, or be a power within it."
— John D’Emilio, history professor at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, in Newsweek’s cover story about "The Future of Gay America.

"Historically, radical feminism portrayed pornography as exploitative. Now we’re saying it can be beautiful."
— Laura Thomas, 23, of San Francisco, to Newsweek.

"My view is that you need to use all the tactics available, even when you know that some of the things you do will antagonize and always get it wrong."
— From Sunday's Doonesbury installment, in which cartoonist Gary Trudeau presented bis tongue-in-cheek "A Doonesbury Planner" of schedule spring comic strip releases.

"We were ex-homosexuals at that time, or at least we thought we were. It sort of surprised us when we fell in love."
— Michael Buzen, a former client of a therapy program that claims to cure homosexuality, telling the Los Angeles Times how he and another client became lovers. Apparently the therapy didn’t take.

"Because when other people write it they always get it wrong."
— Connie Filipello, publicist for George Michael, explaining why the 27-year-old singer has penned his life story, titled A CLOSER MICHEL: THE AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY, set for September release, about the same time as the follow-up to his Path album.

Portion of MTVtosomehing’s advertising that was pulled from an episode last fall that show two homosexuals in bed. 3/5.
— From "Harper’s Index," a compendium of facts and figures found in the April issue of Harper’s magazine.

"Rock Hudson wasn’t Haitian."
— Sign carried by a Haitian expatriate during a protest in Miami. The protest focused on a recent ban on Haitian blood by Florida blood banks, which cited the prevalence of HIV among Haitians as reason for imposing the ban.

"This guy plays well-known faggot Rock Hudson in a show guaranteed to offend normal sensibilities. It’s on WRTV Monday evening."
— Cutline beneath a picture of actor Thomas Ian Griffith, who played Rock Hudson in a TV movie, that appeared in the Martinsville (Ind.) News and Sentinel. The publisher and the staffer who wrote the cutline "did not mean it as a slam against homosexuals."

"There are many motives behind the ‘hate crimes’ movement."
— Executive director Urozbi Vaidi, commenting on the actions of ACT UP.

"13. Andy raps with new AIDS activist Ronald Reagan:"n
— "Sorry about the last eight years."
— "It happens, sir."
— From Sunday’s Doonesbury installment, in which cartoonist Gary Trudeau presented bis tongue-in-cheek "A Doonesbury Planner" of schedule spring comic strip releases.

"If you’re smart and rich you can always buy pretty."
— Comic Sandra Bernhard, when asked which she’d rather be.

"What do I do to defend myself? Do I say I am not a racist? That sound like, ‘I am not a crook.’"
— Andy Rooney, in his return engagement on 60 Minutes, remarking on bis suspension for allegedly racist and homophobic remarks be made to a reporter from the Advocate.

Thanks, Tennessee, for two great years!
In the last twenty-four months, Dare has grown from an eight-page paper with only 600 readers in one city into the twenty pages you and about 8100 other Tennesseans will read this week.

Somewhere in Tennessee, someone reads a copy of Dare on the average of once every minute and fifteen seconds — a total of almost 550,000 times over the last two years.

Our staff has mushroomed from one full-time and two part-time volunteers working on a kitchen table to three full-time and 22 part-time staffers and contributors based in our new 2000-square-foot offices, complete with computerized typesetting and graphics and a new statewide toll free telephone service, just blocks from the Tennessee State Capitol.

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What that means to our readers and advertisers is that we now have the resources we need to consistently deliver the high quality of writing, production and readership Tennessee’s lesbian and gay community deserves.

We’d like to thank everyone who has made Dare possible — our readers, our advertisers, and, of course, our fine staff and contributors.

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+ Talking about the afterlife

reviewed by JOAN MILOWITZ
Special to Dare

Thomas Mann insisted that his novels ought to be read at least twice. That rule fits artifacts, which has a crafty title and is a sequel to scarfrown tar.

As a novel artifacts lacks some of the devastating intensity of what can be designated as Part One.

Novelists, as Paul Monette well knows, must bow to the prejudices of the publisher or remain unpublished. In order to fulfill this duty, detailed descriptions of sex scenes are given.

Of course, sex is a language in its own right, like music, and cannot be reduced to words. The unsayable cannot be said.

On first reading some readers will toss this novel aside as repulsive mush. If so, they will be mistaken.

This is a well-constructed novel. Take the relationship between Steven and Mark which is so skillfully worked out that the reader is suddenly surprised to find Mark there.

That is what ARTIFACTS is really about, not about finding a fleeting paradise via penis and pizza. At the end it stops abruptly because what happens is unsayable.

What does happen is the "afterlife"—a recovery from the loss of the first lover, the gradual realization that life goes on and the continuation of that life with someone else. It is not a matter of false loyalty or false grief.

Among the misguided notions we all have to struggle against is the one that regards dying young as a crime. That is a modern perversion.

Jesus (mentioned several times) and Alexander the Great, died at 35. Whereas scarfrown tar, for all its "shattering eloquence," ends in despair, ARTIFACTS is a book of hope.

The quality of love is not measured by the quantity of time available.

Margaret, who holds the show together and who nurses the dying Korean Ray Lee, gives us two wise paradigms: "Dying makes people grow up sometimes" and "I'd take a year in love," expanded in "Maybe I'd be selfish and take the first year first. Then see about later later."

Incidentally, she is straight.

The absurd division of humanity into "hehas", "hers" and gays/lesbians is not only simplistic, but wrong and wrong-headed. Remember the time when the punsides used to proclaim, daringly, that two percent of the population are invert?

The AIDS revolution has accelerated history amazingly. The leap between scarfrown tar and ARTIFACTS shows that clearly.

The reader might detect several distractions in this novel—a certain cynicism that out from time to time. Monette himself speaks of "California bullshit."

That says it perfectly.

Some might be troubled by the obsession with food.

The references to Ancient Egypt give us the cue that we are dealing with Ka-offerings to the gods.

The notion of Ka runs throughout the book, so much so that I suggest that one ought to read Chapter 5 in Henri Frankfort's book KINGSHIP AND THE GODS.

This is a serious tip, not an attempt to be witty.

The life-is-a-journey motif is prominent. Sonny, the beautiful Greek, is assured by his channe1er that he is not gay. So he leaves in his Mercedes, travelling to paradise via the Second Cataract.
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De-gaying AIDS: Inclusiveness or homophobia?

by JIM ROCHE
Contributing Writer

SITTING AT A TABLE in the recreation center at Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC) in New York, I overheard comments about recent thefts. A letter from the center’s staff sent to all GMHC clients warned of thefts of jackets, coats and money from the center. A number of gay clients expressed their concern and ideas on what’s happening. “They’ve ruined it, like they have elsewhere.”

“They are the increasing number of IV drug users who make use of all of the city’s HIV-related services, including free dinners served for PWAs every day at sites throughout the city. At all the free dinners, a slow but progressive change can be seen. Once made up of almost totally gay men, they now include drug users, women, families and homeless people. In the past, gay men described these meals as the highlight of their week, ‘a place you could go to be with friends, peers, be with people like you...if you were missing for two weeks, people asked whether you were dead or calling.’

Now I heard: ‘staff at one dinner actually frisk people.’ At other dinners, if someone is missing or in the hospital, the staff won’t share client’s names, phone numbers or personal information with concerned friends. What was once a community of gay men helping other gay men in a crisis has become institutionalized, depersonalized and to some, dangerous.

Originally, programs like GMHC were set up to empower people with AIDS. Now their very institutional structure seems to have as its aim control, central power control and, some would say, mind control. The tenor of social functions has changed, the controls have become more centralized, depersonalized and to some, dangerous.

Inclusiveness became the name of the game. AIDS programs, like GMHC, set up to empower people with AIDS. Now their very institutional structure seems to have as its aim control, central power control and, some would say, mind control. The tenor of social functions has changed, the controls have become more inclusive, but not necessarily to everyone’s liking.

At first, when AIDS really seemed to be a gay disease, almost every program established to provide leadership and services in this crisis was started by and for PWAs, gay men and lesbians. But soon it became apparent that this ‘gay-centric’ view of AIDS was in conflict with the reality that HIV has become a major problem of people of color, IV drug users, women and the poor. It is a problem of all oppressed people across the social, political and economic spectrum.

Inclusiveness became the name of the game. “AIDS IS NOT A GAY DISEASE” has become the new coalition’s slogan. This effort to be inclusive and set few limits of who could join the fight against AIDS as long as they wanted to defeat the disease provided opportunity for homophobia to grow right in our own backyard.

In a recent GMHC orchestrated letter to the editor in New York’s gay newspaper, the agency’s ‘people of color’ rebuked the ‘gay white community’ for its insensitivity to issues of race in their concern about the controversial appointment of Dr. Myers as health commissioner. In their letter they questioned, “Weren’t they black men appointed by a black mayor, would you have felt so compelled to criticize him?”

They ended their complaints about gays by saying they are “tired of you in the white gay community who purport to speak for an AIDS agenda.” In all of this they failed to even once note Myers’ well-known and documented homophobia, his efforts to close gay bath houses, bars and gay bookstores. His aim in Indiana was to destroy gay community and culture. They failed to note his efforts to undermine the civil rights of lesbians and gay men through uninforming testimonies, contact tracing and notification or his policy which allows anyone to accuse an HIV positive person of unsafe sexual activity without being informed of who the accuser is, and then the HIV positive person can be locked up! How can employees of GMHC/the G used to stand for GAY by the way, but the word is seldom used now in an effort to be inclusive) ignore the uproar heard from almost every human rights organization in Myers’ home state?

THEY CAN IGNOR IT because somehow, even on the staff of a ‘gay’ organization, homophobia has been okayed in the name of inclusiveness. In New York the bumbling at dinner tables is now front page news in most of the gay press. It’s bitter, nasty and ripping the lesbian and gay community apart. Reports from other parts of the country point to this happening elsewhere at an alarming rate.

AIDS, as we have heard for years, is not a gay disease. And services to people with AIDS must reflect this reality. The comments about the thefts reflect a continuing and growing division between different groups trying to vie for the same limited money, benefits and services. The assumption by many gay men at these AIDS dinners that IV drug users are stealing, fighting and the cause of problems reflects their phobias and racism.

For a good look at racism, we don’t need to leave our community. That’s plain and simple. The divisions that these situations reflect have to be overcome if we are not to be overwhelmed by our own bigotry. But while AIDS isn’t a gay disease, let’s not forget that it is a disease particular to gays and that one of its most damaging effects is that it works in concert with homophobic bigotry. A major reason AIDS funding and education programs were so slow in coming into being was homophobia and homophobia. Some in leadership wanted us dead, and still do. That homophobia has to be dealt with while we deal with AIDS, but now that our coalition is inclusive, fighting this bigotry seems to have lost its urgency.

STONEMEN RIOTS

KERRY FOUND HERSELF WEDGED BETWEEN TWO WOMEN WEARING POWER SHOULDERS.

— Cartoon by Andrea Natalie
Wake up, Petunia!

by NANCY LYN DEFINE
Contributing Writer

LOOK, PETUNIA, please stop bothering the rest of us with your sorry ass, attitudinal self. Yeah, we know who you think you are. And we know who you think we are. But to tell you the truth, we don't care. Oh sure, when you strut your stuff, when you sashay past us up to the bar, we're watching you. But not the way the think. We're not admiring your adorable buns. Actually, we're hoping you'll fall flat on your incredibly arrogant face. It isn't that we mind your posturing and posing. But save us the pomposity. Please. Contrary to what you might think, the rest of us manage to get along pretty well. So why don't you put the attitude on hold for a while, dearie?

By the way, that gentleman over there, the one you always refer to as a "left over old dearie? You know. The one you swear once dropped his handkerchief by you? Remember how you imitated him last week? How successfully you lipped and lied? Remember how you absolutely screamed (in a loud falsetto) "Who was that? Do you know him? No. don't turn around. Go over there. Pretend you're looking for your drink or something. How's my hair? I can't believe I wore these pants. I look so fat in them!" Well, that "queen" is more of a man than you'll ever be. And he's got something you'll never have. Guts. In his day, gay life was built on character. Now it's merely based on atmosphere. Yeah, you sure gave a hell of a performance. Almost as if you were made for the part. I think we all know how you'll be acting in a few years. So why don't you cut him a little slack? Maybe some bimbo will do the same for you some day.

While I'm at it, could you try to refrain from openly making fun of another person while openly making fun of another person while I'm standing anywhere near you? You're embarrassing me. Besides, it's usually someone I like. You'd probably like them, too, if you could somehow manage to stop judging the whole world by your rather limited standards. And laughter at the expense of others always comes back to haunt you.

As pathetic as you obviously think we are, how big do you think you'd go over in a sports bar? You know, those places where you suddenly start acting like Scarlet O'Hara?

You see, we're all here because here we can be ourselves. We can let our hair down, so to speak. Mostly, we're here because we share a common need to be together.

So, come on. Give us a break, and give yourself a break. And please try to remember that every one of us sneaks that last second look in the mirror on our way out the bathroom door. We ALL stand there with our 'bad ass' selves, smugly secure in the knowledge that we're just a little better than everyone else, including our friends. And if it weren't for that tidy little secret, we probably wouldn't keep coming back week after week.

And before you even think it, yes, there is more than a bit of the "big girlie" in all of us. And yes, we all complain that there's nobody anyone new here. Or that this place is beat. Or that there's just nobody in this town. So, come on. Get a life. There's really no need to be a Roseanne Barr about it.

ONE MORE THING. Please stop complaining about all the "dykes" or "faggots" in the place. Try to look at it from the other side. While they're annoying you by their mere presence, you're annoying them. Actually, you're annoying most of us. A lot.

Contrary to your incredibly vain opinion, Lord Byron, there have been other men with classic features. And other boys who were every bit as pretty. So if you think someone's too fat, or her hair is too gray, or his pants are just too tight for words, then, don't use any. Please. Or use them standing someplace else. Like in the other room.

I guess, ultimately, we all provide the fodder for each other. Which is fine. Probably even the way it should be. But life has a way of pulling us up short. And it really doesn't need your help. So, the next time you're tying on the old ascot, practicing the slight but repeated motion of tossing your golden locks or lamenting the deplorable number of real women left in the world, remember that a bar isn't supposed to be a place to have a good time. If we want to subject ourselves to a couple of hours of self-abasement, we'll stop by the neighborhood church. Or run for public office. ♦

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