Long before there was a Lesbian and Gay Coalition for Justice, back in the days when Tennessee still had a same-sex sodomy law and years before the Human Rights Campaign ever considered holding a fundraising dinner in the Volunteer State—even before there was a Pride march in the state’s capital—Stuart Bivin, then a recent graduate of Vanderbilt University’s School of Law, decided what Tennessee really needed was a weekly gay and lesbian newspaper.

Working with a small group of friends and enlistng the support of a stalwart band of loyal original advertisers, Dare was born, with the premiere issue hitting the streets on March 23, 1988.

When Dare first appeared in March, 1988, it marked the culmination of months of preparation and planning. And when the first issue appeared late that Wednesday afternoon, members of the mid-south’s lesbian and gay community were treated to their first professional weekly dose of news, information, opinion and features.

Now, as Query (as Dare ultimately came to be known) celebrates its first decade of publication, it’s rather enlightening to look back at how it was created.

The newspaper you now hold in your hand was born—according to its founder, the late Stuart Bivin—out of a desire to “create an artificial meeting space for the community, a space in which the exchange of news and ideas would be possible”—a sort of community center on newsprint.

Several months prior to the publication of the paper’s first issue, Bivin, along with Carole Cunningham and Jeff Ellis sat down around a kitchen table to discuss the possibilities of establishing a weekly newspaper.

“We felt that the growth of activism here, coupled with statewide efforts, and the growing spirit nationally following the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in 1987, pointed to a need for a lesbian and gay newsweekly published here by Tennesseans and for Tennesseans,” Bivin said in a 1989 interview to celebrate the paper’s first anniversary.

Not only were editorial direction and story ideas discussed during those kitchen table meetings, but a name had to be selected.

Dare was selected because of the famous Oscar Wilde line about, “The love that dare not speak its name.”

“Well,” according to an editorial in the premiere issue, “we Dare!”

And, with that “Tennessee’s Lesbian and Gay Newsweekly” was off and running.

“Probably the first real indication we had that the paper was being well received was when we went to the [lesbian activist] Karen Among the people who have made us proud during the past ten years are these individuals. Query’s Tennesseans of the Decade are (clockwise from top): Query founder R. Stuart Bivin III; sodomy law challenge plaintiffs James Tallent, Christopher Simien and Penny Campbell; Bill Turner, of the Tennessee Cracker Barrel Coalition; AIDS activist Anna Green; AIDS Response Knoxville’s Michael Arve; renowned photographer Jan Lynch, whose work has appeared in the pages of Query since its inception; Nashville attorney Abby Rubenfeld, who has been named Tennessean of the Year four times; and choreographer Paul Vasterling of Nashville Ballet. —Query Polk Photo
After the success of the first issue, the Dare staff was confronted with their largest stumbling block to date—the refusal by Nashville's Mid-South Publishing Company to print the paper again. They had agreed to print the paper on a weekly basis, but seemed to have a problem when we arrived with the boards for the second issue. They told us they couldn’t print that issue or any future issues,” Bivin said.

With that decision by officials of the printing company, the challenge was to find a printer who could produce the paper by the Wednesday afternoon deadline promised to advertisers.

“We couldn’t let down our advertisers. They had gone out on a limb for us and we couldn’t fail to hold up our end of the bargain,” Bivin said.

The search for a new printer led to Wilson County, home of the Lebanon Democrat and its publisher Yvonne Wallace. Dorothy Harrison, then-director of public relations at Middle Tennessee State University and Ellis' former employee, long-time friend and journalistic mentor, suggested Wallace and the Democrat as a possible remedy for the problem.

In 1989, Bivin remembered those trying times: “For 48 hours I was going crazy just trying to find someone to print the paper. I went on a wild goose chase, from one place to another, when Dot suggested I call Yvonne Wallace at the Democrat. She agreed to print the paper and, since then, everyone there has been extremely helpful and supportive, in spite of the fact that they lost some subscribers and had to deal with a number of irate callers because they had printed a newspaper for homosexuals.”

Pyramid Publishing’s initial difficulties then became big news for the state’s mainstream media and stories quickly followed in The Tennessean, the Nashville Banner and in Memphis’ Commercial Appeal. As a result, Bivin and Ellis became friends with and sources for some of the state’s leading journalists, creating heretofore unavailable relationships among mainstream media and the state’s burgeoning lesbian/gay media.

After the printing problem was solved, the next major issue facing the staff centered on the publica- tion of names and the possible repercussions of such publication.

“It was a very touchy issue. I had always been taught that ‘names mean news.’ It opened a whole new can of worms that we were forced to deal with,” Ellis said. “In 1998 people might find it hard to believe, but in 1988 when we first started the paper there were people who were vehemently opposed to us using surnames in our coverage.”

In the end, the paper weathered the storm. But names remain an important part of the paper’s coverage and focus.

“From a purely journalistic standpoint, if some- one places themselves in the middle of a news story or a public event, they make themselves partic- ipants and like to be included in coverage,” Ellis said in 1989. “But we don’t just print someone’s name because we know they are lesbian or gay. They must first do something newsworthy. And we know what repercussions could ensue if the wrong people discovered the right people are lesbian or gay.”

Perhaps the biggest challenge faced by Pyramid Publishing came in January 1990, when attorneys for the California-based Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) filed lawsuit in fed- eral court in Nashville, alleging that Pyramid Pub- lishing, publisher of Dare, was infringing upon its trademark.

The lawsuit—filed in federal court for the Middle District of Tennessee by Nashville attorney R. Horton Frank III, local counsel for the plaintiffs—claimed trademark infringement and sought an injunction against the use of the name “Dare.” The suit de- manded unspecified damages and attorney’s fees.

Bivin called the lawsuit “frivolous,” claiming the suit had no merit “because our marks are com- pletely dissimilar.”

The lawsuit, however, continued. And on May 10, 1991, Bivin announced that the newspaper’s name would be changed to Query, effective on June 7 of that year.

In making the announcement, Bivin said that the terms of the settlement forbade him to disclose details of the agreement.

In a 1991 interview, Bivin was quoted as saying, “We’re tickled with the settlement—it’s even bet- ter than if we had gone to trial and won. And we’d especially like to thank Irwin Venick and Larry Woods, our attorneys, as well as AGU’s Tennessee’s Holy Weisberg, for their support and hard work.”

Thus, Dare was the newspaper’s name for just over three years, while Query became the moniker known around the country for Tennessee’s Lesbian and Gay Newsweekly.

Since the D.A.R.E. lawsuit and subsequent name change, Query has flourished: circulation numbers have increased dramatically and while that has happened, the paper has outlasted its original projections and has seen remarkable growth.

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The Democrat.
Celebrating an anniversary, sort of

Like most anniversaries, the anniversary we celebrate this week is somewhat arbitrarily chosen. While Dare was indeed published for the first time one year ago, the spirit of Dare was born at least two years ago—and born fittingly in the midst of a controversy surrounding the editorial decisions of another publication, Vanderbilt’s student magazine Versus.

Editor’s Note
In the March 17, 1989, issue of Dare, staff writer Carole Cunningham recalled an earlier incident which was largely responsible for Stuart Bivin’s decision to establish a lesbian and gay newspaper in Tennessee. What follows is a portion of Cunningham’s ruminations on the paper’s first anniversary.

Stuart Bivin, then a law student biding his time until graduation, appeared before the Vanderbilt Student Communications (VSC) Board to take issue with a Versus piece that referred to the “muggers and faggots” who could be counted on to roam Centennial Park every evening after dusk, chilling the heart of the (very) young narrator. As he spoke to the VSC board (using his name and not a pseudonym), Stuart did not represent Vanderbilt Lambda or T-GALA. Lambda would not be established for another semester and T-GALA was hardly a shine in anyone’s eye at that time.

What Stuart did represent was a principle: the principle that if you’re attacked—in print, or anywhere else—you are duty-bound to speak out for yourself and for anyone else who might similarly become the subject of harassment, bigotry or plain old stupidity.

The sensation on campus—using his name for the benefit of reporters at the meeting, but by giving them a signed, written copy of his statement—resulted in several letters to the editor of the student paper and dozens of obscene phone calls to Stuart’s home. But my friend was as convinced then as now that the price paid from a little publicity was well worth being able to stand firmly by what he believed in and to say so with no apologies made.

Like the editor of the student magazine he took issue with, Stuart as editor of Dare has been under fire from time to time for his own editorial policies—fire from readers and fire from writers like me. Dare’s quality and endurance will be measured, I think, by its ability to assimilate good criticism and to analyze and respond to criticism it deems unreasonable.

The Stuart Bivin who stood before the VSC board two years ago realized the incredible power a misused phrase, a brazen stereotype could have over the mind of Versus’ readership. He claimed the use of the language was harmful not only because it was derogatory but because it did not do justice to the gay community.

...The skirmishes with the readership Dare enjoyed during its first months in production showed how important the paper was going to be to this community, and how much it would challenge and push us all to consider where we were, where we were going, where we had been. And those battles, however ill-fought they were, made me proud to be part of something so alive that it would be so threatening.

—From Dare, Vol. 2, No. 11, March 17-23, 1989
ONE FUNNY WOMAN
Against all odds

I’ve just recovered from my semiannual session as a single parent.
Fortunately for me and our offspring, this is not the normal state of affairs around our house. Though it could be argued that as a housewife stay-at-home kind of mom I do take on the lion's share of, say, dirty diapers (all 7,811 of them)—still, I’m no single mom. These times on my own always reaffirm my heartfelt respect and knowing awe of single parents.
They also reaffirm how much I would miss her if she were gone.

It’s not that I’m pining for the wife when she’s away. We’ve been together for more than ten years now and we could use the occasional break. God knows we’ve earned it. It’s just that when she gets on that plane, underneath I always fear that I’ll never see her again. That something will happen. That it was the last time.

I had a phone call this summer from a colleague. It was early one day and I was full of the minutiae of daily life—a shower here, a breakfast there, a load of laundry heading down the chute.

When the phone rang I thought it was the neighbor calling about a play date for our young daughters, getting them together so that we, the two at-home lesbian moms on the street, could get together for a good natter.

Relive those boogie nights: '70s/'80s RETRO MUSIC will have you dancing to a disco beat!

One baby fell and the other got lost.

If you thought everyone was cool with your relationship with Martha, just wait and see what happens should Martha pass away. You, too, can become a punching bag for an entire family's collective psyche. A common enemy on which to vent decades worth of suppressed emotion. For there is no death without trauma. I just hope I don’t have to deal with it anytime soon.

Sometimes at night during those long business trips, when our two children are safe in their beds (or more likely in ours since they become little limpets in her absence) I’ll putz around the kitchen, wasting precious hours I could be working or relaxing without guilt. It’s funny, our evenings are spent most often with one another, her or her on-call for her job, or with my Friday night standing date with the bills. And yet, I know she’s there. I know that I only have to walk through the kitchen and across the dining room to her office, and that she’ll be willing to drop anything to give me a few minutes.

I know that if I’m busy doing my thing and haven’t poked my nose in her business, she’ll end up checking in. I’ll have to positively kick her out to get anything done. Hard to imagine losing that without the chance for a fight.

So tonight, I’ll remember what my friend said, and I’ll appreciate my wife, and give thanks for her safe return, for my parental reprieve, for our continued co-existence, for our daily beating of the odds. I’ll remember.

Editor's Note: Beren DeMotsler is a freelance writer who lives with her wife and two kids in Oregon. Her columns appear in lesbian and gay publications throughout the country. She has been a regular contributor to Query since 1995. This particular column was written in response to the death of Query publisher Stuart Bein and was first published in October, 1997.

When the phone rang I thought it was the neighbor calling about a play date for our young daughters, getting them together so that we, the two at-home lesbian moms on the street, could get together for a good natter.

Join us for these events:

Join us for these events:

Friday, March 27
We welcome TWO CHICKS & A DRUM—so come catch the beat with us!

Saturday, March 28
Relive those boogie nights: '70s/'80s RETRO MUSIC will have you dancing to a disco beat!

Wednesday, April 3
Come play with us and win some sweets on CANDY CASINO night

Saturday, April 4
JUDY RABINOVITZ AND FRIENDS will be on band for Women in the Round

Sunday, April 5
The diva herself, BIANCA PAIGE brings her show to the café

And a lot more still to come!

Visit us on the World Wide Web: www.Lesbianation.com

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Nashville's Hottest HAPPY HOUR just got better! 2-4-1 Well Drinks EVERY NIGHT from 4 to 8 pm

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TUESDAY, MARCH 31 LEATHER NIGHT

$1.50 longnecks for men in leather

TUESDAY, MARCH 31 LEATHER NIGHT

Get Your Illusions T-Shirts NOW!

Coming Soon: Watch for our new patio!

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Thanks, everyone, for the money ($245.68) raised for Nashville CARES during our Wet Briefs contest!

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**MULTIPLE AIDS-RELATED LOSS**

**Finding a reason to go on**

Though some may claim that the AIDS crisis is over, for those who have survived the loss of loved ones to AIDS, the effects of AIDS continue. Because of the lingering impact of multiple AIDS-related loss, even if "AIDS ended tomorrow, there would be no end of AIDS."

Those of us who have been touched by AIDS, especially survivors of multiple AIDS-related losses, are living through a disaster that is historically unique and leaves our lives forever altered. Over time, I became angry that multiple loss was not receiving the attention it deserved. Like many Jews, in response to the Holocaust, I wanted society and history to acknowledge this disaster.

As a result, I wrote a book to "bear witness" to multiple loss from AIDS. The book compares AIDS to historic disasters by telling the story of various survivors and analyzing their experience through a psychological and sociological perspective. One-third of the book is devoted to offering suggestions for recovery that a number of survivors have found helpful.

Multiple loss has a number of distinguishing characteristics that combine to increase the impact on survivors. The cumulative and compounding effects of multiple loss often result in bereavement overload and unresolved grief. Commonly, survivors of multiple loss can look back upon their history of losses and find one overshadowing loss that continues to resonate and sometimes causes later losses to be remain unresolved.

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**Continuing loss distinguishes AIDS from most disasters.** There is great comfort in knowing that a tragedy is over, that losses are limited. With AIDS, however, losses are bound to continue. The roller coaster of hope and disappointment, so typical of AIDS, makes the continuing nature of AIDS even more challenging.

Certain characteristics of AIDS heighten the impact on survivors. The disease process itself is often grueling and painful. Further, there is an age inappropriateness inherent to AIDS. Persons in their 20s, 30s and 40s are not "supposed to" die or be suffering so much loss. The focused impact of AIDS on certain communities increases the effect on survivors. First, the overall community of society may respond with stigmatization against persons with AIDS and survivors. Social support, normally available in a time of loss, may be unavailable or the effects of stigmatization may actually worsen grief. Second, the focus of AIDS on certain communities devastates the very people who would have normally been available to provide support.

Other issues exacerbate the impact of multiple AIDS-related loss such as the prevalence of survivor's guilt. I have never known a survivor of multiple loss who was not affected by survivor's guilt, a condition that can manifest itself in "sub-intentional suicide" behaviors such as unsafe sex or drug abuse. The interface of families of origin and families of choice are regularly fraught with tension. Resentments may fester and contribute to depression. The interrelationship of all these many issues frequently results in symptoms of unresolved grief and trauma. This realization is actually a first step toward healing from the impact of multiple loss. Realize that you have survived an historically unique and isolated disaster. Acknowledging this reality helps to "normalize the abnormality" of this experience.

Recognizing the symptoms of trauma and/or unresolved grief is the next step in recovering from the impact of multiple loss. Depression, for example, is a classic sign of multiple loss and may include trouble sleeping, loss of interest in formerly pleasurable activities, excessive sadness and emotional lability.

Another cluster of symptoms typical in survivors of multiple loss is a general numbness consistent with trauma. Feelings may be muted. For example, the death of another person to AIDS, even when they were a loved one may provoke little feeling. Recurrent thoughts and preoccupation with AIDS may also be a symptom of surviving trauma.

Although many of the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) arise in survivors, their reaction can hardly be call "post-traumatic" because the trauma is often continuing. The good news is that there are a number of helpful ways to recover from the effects of multiple loss. Most important is finding support from other survivors. One way to find this support is to attend a group for survivors of multiple loss. In Seattle, I began a peer-based emotional support group for survivors. Nothing promotes healing better than knowing you are not alone.

Taking the risk to form new relationships is crucial. It may seem easier to respond to multiple loss by isolating, a coping behavior that prevents future losses by avoiding meaningful relationships. However, this response is actually a symptom of complicated grief and trauma and does not promote healing. Be assured, it takes courage to risk new relationships in the face of multiple loss, but nothing is more important.

Responding to AIDS in a direct way that counters the negative effects of the epidemic is helpful. Volunteering may be the most successful healing response to counteract the hopelessness and helplessness that so often surrounds AIDS. Volunteering is also an excellent way to gain support from other survivors, to avoid isolation and offers a pro-active way to respond to AIDS. Additionally, volunteering allows us to "get outside ourselves" and see our "problems" in a broader context.

Surviving multiple loss demands that we take good care of ourselves. Healing from this form of grief requires work and real effort. Unfortunately, this process sometimes involves facing pain and that is why some avoid it. For those who are committed to healing from the effects of multiple loss, there is hope.
Jamie graduated from high school on a stormy May night in 1981. The next day, he packed his new car with his belongings and drove to Memphis to begin the new life that lay ahead.

To Jamie, it was the realization of a dream. Finally, he thought, he would be able to escape the stifling confines of small town life.

Jamie had known for quite some time that he was different from the other kids in his hometown. Still, he tried to fit in by being the class clown and once he even tried out for the football team.

“Yet I guess my heart wasn’t in it,” he remembers.

When Jamie arrived on the Memphis gay scene, he achieved the instant popularity that had eluded him in high school. His winning ways and charming sense of humor attracted people of all ages.

In 1981, AIDS wasn’t talked about in Memphis gay circles. I knew, because I moved there two months after Jamie to begin a new career in visual merchandising. And for a couple of months, Jamie and I shared an apartment.

Because only five years separated our birthdays, Jamie and I were raised together, more like brothers than nephews. And for a while, at least, I marveled at the charm that had eluded him in high school. His winning ways and apparent prudence compared to my then-provincial prudishness.

Jamie would wake me every morning by throwing open the shades, jumping on my bed and singing: “Wake up, wake up, the sun is up. The dew is on the buttercup.” Honest to God.

I would throw a pillow, an alarm clock, a shoe or whatever was handy and hurl it at him. Then, he would begin to tell me about his sexual escapades of the previous night.

And for a while, at least, I marveled at the ease with which he went from one bed to another. I would never do that, I told myself. But then I did—a lot.

We didn’t keep score, but there were times when we compared notes and names. You see, it was as if your place in Memphis gay society was validated by the men you bedded.

I offer no excuses for myself. There have been moments when I’ve wished those times never existed, but still I have a lot of fun during those days. That was then and this is now.

I don’t have AIDS, but my nephew does. Why? It was just the luck of the draw, I guess. Still, there are times when the guilt engulfs me and I ask God how I was able to escape those days virtually unscathed. I don’t understand. Maybe I’m not supposed to.

So I deal daily with the fact that someone I love dearly may die from a disease no one seems to understand. And I deal daily with overcoming the guilt I feel.

“If only I’d told him what I really thought about things,” I say. “What if I’d set a better example by not sleeping around.”

—from Dare, Vol. 1, No. 5, on April 20-26, 1988
In John, 2102 Belcourt Ave., Nashville

Showgirls

Also showing at Watkins' Belcourt:
Oscar & Lucinda

The Sweet Hereafter

Afterward

Tennessee's first cases of AIDS were reported in 1982. Since that time, state health officials have tallied 7,323 total AIDS cases, with 8,769 HIV cases counted since January 1, 1992. Some 3,804 people have died of AIDS in Tennessee since 1982. Gay men still account for the majority of AIDS cases in Tennessee—4,399 (or 60%)—and just under half (4,082 or 46.5%) of the total HIV cases reported.

—From Dare, Vol. 2, No. 48, December 1, 1989
Photographer Jan Lynch

Photographer. Artist. Humanitarian. Scamp. Priest. Friend. Jan Lynch, the Knoxville photographer, who for almost seven years in Query chronicled the emergence of the lesbian and gay community as a force to be reckoned with in Tennessee, could be described with any or all of those words.

Jan Lynch died early Wednesday morning, November 6, 1996, at Knoxville's Fort Sanders Hospital, his battle with AIDS finally coming to an end. He was 47 years old.

"We're all going to be survivors of this," Lynch told a reporter shortly before his death. "One way or another."

Jan Lynch's legacy—the wealth of his photographic works that are contained in many museums, galleries and private collections throughout the world—will continue to survive, allowing his admirers and friends still more opportunities to acknowledge his immense contributions to the gay community, as well as to the artistic community.

Throughout 1996, Query contributing writer Ed White chronicled Lynch's continuing battle with AIDS in a series of feature stories. White, who served as Jan's unofficial spokesperson during the final stages of his illness, told The Knoxville News-Sentinel why Lynch decided to go public with his battle with AIDS: "He doesn't shrink from the idea that exposure will bring censure from those who will say he deserves this cruel disease. In fact, he thinks any moralizing done in his name or on the subject of AIDS should be a lesson that we should all care for one another, that compassion is the proper response to suffering, that hope is essential to everyone's quality of life even in the face of overwhelming odds, and that ignorance is the biggest threat in the battle against AIDS."

Writing in Query's April 26, 1996, edition, White talked about Lynch's background: Despite living so far from the usual cultural centers of gravity, Jan Lynch is a widely traveled man. He received a classical education at the University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, where one of his mentors was a student of philosopher Gabriel Marcel. Lynch graduated with honors in philosophy and history, and was pastor of a Greek Catholic Church.

"I'm a quiet, discreet person," Lynch said. "I never made a secret of my being a priest, nor did I ever make a point of hiding it. It just hasn't come up all that often." Archives of Lynch's work have been established at the Tom of Finland Foundation in Los Angeles and the Leslie-Lohman Gallery in New York City.
The setting is a television studio. The director gives instructions about camera angles to his crew, the hosts banter with their guest panelists, the production assistants debate who will run to the drugstore to buy film and batteries for a still camera.

With just 45 minutes to go until showtime, the studio is fairly adither—with the hustle and bustle of bringing a live telecast to a waiting at-home audience.

But this isn’t a syndicated talk show or network news show that’s about to air. Instead, it’s yet another example of AIDS Response Knoxville’s (ARK) innovative methods of educating the public about HIV/AIDS.

Now in its third season, ARK Second Monday airs the second Monday of each month on Knoxville’s CTVL Comcast Channel 12.

Hosted by Michael Arvé and Keith Chandler, the program continues to attract more viewers while providing vital HIV/AIDS information to the community. Among topics covered over the past three seasons are pediatric AIDS, AIDS in the workplace and the effects of AIDS on the gay male community in Tennessee.

Arvé and Chandler moderate the proceedings—directed by ARK’s Kevin Jeske and brought to the home television screen by a seasoned team of ARK staffers, including Alyson Hargrove, Gary Wires, Chris Haley-Walden and Adrienne Claytor— which include treatment updates and calendar listings of upcoming events that are pertinent to the community. But most of the hour-long program is devoted to the discussion of the stated topic, featuring guests knowledgeable about the subject.

Arvé and Chandler engage their guests in a lively discussion, inviting viewers to call in with their questions and comments.

What follows is a compelling, sometimes in-your-face examination of the impact HIV and AIDS have had on the community in general, while focusing attention on the important issues in particular.

But ARK on the Air isn’t the only educational innovation that brings the news home to thousands of East Tennesseans. The Arvé-directed Masque Theatre is “devoted to presenting performances which promote education, awareness, compassion and empowerment as a means to overcoming a variety of obstacles to living in the ‘90s.” The critically acclaimed theatrical troupe relates its message through the entertainment provided by a live, onstage production.

Further, ARK education specialists take their message into the heart of the community, scheduling community speaking engagements throughout the region. Among groups who’ve had ARK speakers include: Carson-Newman College, the Lee Williams Senior Center, Rogers Memorial Baptist Church, the Family Life Center at Knoxville College, American Red Cross, MLK Community Center of Blount County and East Towne Mall.

In addition, ARK has reached more than 10,000 individuals through its street outreach efforts and in 1997, achieved 104 percent of its stated goal for the number of people tested for HIV.

In its third quarter progress report for 1997, representatives of ARK’s education department wrote, “Even though we have already achieved many of our goals, [we are] not resting on our laurels and will continue to provide even more outreach to the community during the remainder of the year.”
1987 March on Washington helped to change course of activism in Tennessee

While organizers of the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights begin their grassroots efforts to ensure success, activists throughout Tennessee say the effects of a similar 1987 March continue to be felt in the Volunteer State. And, they say, the time is right for another March on the nation's capital.

Editor's Note

Most activists point to 1987's March on Washington as the beginning of today's lesbian/gay activism in the Volunteer State. Here, in a story that originally appeared in December, 1991, two longtime community members reflect on that experience.

The 1987 March "was one of the biggest highs you can possibly imagine," said Vincent Astor, president of the Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center. Sustaining that feeling of euphoria was important to activists as they returned to their hometowns to further the goals of the 1987 March, Astor maintained.

"The people who were in Washington in 1987 were personally bolstered by the experience," Astor said. "And those feelings flowed out to the organizations we all belonged to."

Bob Galloway, pastor of Knoxville's Metropolitan Community Church, said that Knoxville's 1991 Pride observances could be traced to the 1987 March and the feeling of empowerment that participants felt.

"I think the March helped political activism in Knoxville," Galloway said. "The busload of people who went up to Washington felt very empowered and that came from being involved in the March."

The 1987 March followed one that took place in 1979. With some 750,000 people taking part, the 1987 March has been called the largest civil rights march in U.S. history.

Astor said 1987's lobbying efforts provided him with his best memories of the March.

"It may sound corny, but after a day of walking along the unpaved hallways of the House and Senate office buildings, I looked out and saw the sun setting behind the Capitol," he recalled. "I said to myself, 'I have a new life.'"

"The bus load of people who went up to Washington felt very empowered and that came from being involved in the March."

"The March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights began their grassroots efforts to ensure success, activists throughout Tennessee say the effects of a similar 1987 March continue to be felt in the Volunteer State. And, they say, the time is right for another March on the nation's capital."

AIDS activist Anna Green

For most people, Tuesday, June 16, 1992 was a typically hot and muggy summer day in the Mid-South. But for Anna Green, the event of that day changed her life forever, transforming the plain-spoken wife and mother into one of the region's most outspoken AIDS activists.

With her abiding love for her gay brother as the impetus, Anna Green's transformation into an activist may have had a further reaching effect than even she could have imagined. And that is why Anna Green was named Query's Tennessean of the Year for 1992.

Taking her brother's cause to heart—Anthony McClendon—said he was denied adequate treatment at Nashville's Baptist Hospital's emergency room because he had AIDS—Green set forth to challenge the institutional hierarchy of the medical establishment.

Organizing a picket and a march outside the hospital were the more public displays of her skill throughout the summer she mounted a letter-writing campaign, calling upon then-Tennessee governor Ned McWherter, Nashville mayor Phil Bredeson, and all the local media (both mainstream and lesbian/gay) to help make her brother's story known.

When Anthony McClendon died in October 1992, Anna Green pledged to continue her efforts in homage to his memory: "No one deserves to be treated the way my brother was treated."

Editor's Note

One of the most-discussed topics of discussion among lesbians and gay men over the past decade has been parenthood. Former staff writer Arthur Kirkby talked to three lesbian moms for this story which heralded the celebration of Mother's Day, 1992.

Rubenfeld is the biological mother of Lily Alberts. She explained that she and Alberts chose the latter's surname for their daughter to emphasize their partnership.

"A lot of lesbian couples are offended by the question of their relationships," Rubenfeld said. "But we consider it to be educational and don't mind, but we do raise her as co-parents."

Rubenfeld and Alberts made the decision to raise a child as same-sex partners. Other lesbian mothers, like Chattanooga's Corliss Gober, had children from a previous heterosexual partnership.

"My daughter was 15 when I came out," Gober said. "And she was the first person I came out to. I felt like she had a right to know. I had married young and didn't come out until I was 35. My daughter is now 20."

Her daughter's reaction was heartening to Gober:

"I think she took it quite well. I believe he had more problems with the divorce than my sexuality. She is a very bright kid, very open-minded, and dealing with this issue has made her more willing to experience new things."

As a result of the openness of their relationship and their ability to talk about pertinent issues, Gober and her daughter often discuss social issues as they pertain to lesbian and gay civil rights.

"I think that, as a mother, there are always going to be issues," Gober said.

"But I don't think being a lesbian makes it any harder, it's just another issue. Sometimes it is hard for me to accept her marital problems. In straight relationships there tends to be so much role-playing and I just don't think my daughter is into that. I am very proud of her."

Rubenfeld and Alberts, too, are proud of their daughter and foresee a bright future for Lily.

"I don't foresee many difficulties," Alberts said. "Children have so many issues to deal with. If there are any weights that it is an issue, race is an issue, populability and eventually, sexuality are issues. We are very selective of doctors and schools and we are healthy about our family situation. Lily is around so many people who love her. Hopefully we will be well-adjusted and have a tolerance and respect for diversity and if there is ever a problem, we will discuss it thoroughly."

Celebrating lesbian motherhood is becoming more commonplace thanks to what one woman called "a baby boom" in the lesbian community. In fact, more and more lesbians are deciding to become parents—either by giving birth or through adoption.

"It seems like there is something of a baby boom in the lesbian community," said Abby Rubenfeld, a lesbian mother raising a 13-month-old baby in Nashville with her partner, Debra Alberts. "I don't know about the gay male population, but I think it's fascinating that this positive thing is happening to a community where there is so much death."

Editor's Note

So, your mom's a lesbian...

Debra Alberts and daughter Sarah at Nashville's Pride Rally in 1995.
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QUERY CELEBRATES ITS FIRST DECADE
Protesting a bigoted employment policy

Against almost overwhelming odds and rampant apathy, members of the Tennessee Cracker Barrel Coalition in 1991 mounted a swift and strong response to the Lebanon-based restaurant corporation’s announced policy of firing employees thought to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.

On August 11, 1991, members of the Coalition orchestrated a massive protest against Cracker Barrel Old Country Stores Inc., drawing approximately 200 activists from throughout the Southeast and Midwest to Wilson County to stage an action at the corporation’s flagship store in Lebanon.

The attention of the media—national and regional, mainstream and lesbian/gay—focused on the Tennessee lesbian, gay and bisexual community as activists expressed their outrage at the company’s policy, providing role models and a strong example for the burgeoning lesbian/gay rights movement in the Volunteer State.

In a Query editorial (published August 16, 1991) following the protest, praise was heaped upon event organizers: “The most encouraging news from the action was something that Cracker Barrel management has no way of knowing, and it is news that will eventually spell the end of hatemongers getting by with anti-lesbian and -gay violence of any kind: physical, rhetorical, economic or moral. This action was organized and carried out by a new crowd. The demonstration held a sea of new faces.

The community has depended on the same handful of people for leadership for too long. Now, a new generation of lesbian and gay leadership has sprung up with a purpose. Donna Christy, Bill Turner, John Moss, Linda Welch and Gary Boyce are just a few of those who stepped forward to stand up for lesbian and gay Tennesseans, and, for their work, we all owe them and their fellow organizers and protesters a debt of gratitude; and, more important, our cooperation and respect.”

Perhaps more to their credit, Coalition members called upon activists throughout Tennessee to continue their efforts throughout the year, with actions staged in Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville, culminating in a protest in late November at Cracker Barrel’s annual stockholders meeting.

Dining with the enemy
Taking their message to the Wilson County hometown of Cracker Barrel, close to 200 people Sunday called for an end to the corporation’s policy of firing employees thought to be lesbian or gay.

And while an estimated 100 activists staged a picket along the perimeter of Cracker Barrel No. 2’s parking lot, about 75 other activists took their demonstration inside, occupying 40 of the Lebanon restaurant’s 45 tables for three hours, effectively applying an economic stranglehold to the chain’s flagship store, causing other customers to endure a 90-minute wait for tables.

“They’re telling people there is a 45-minute wait for a table.”

Half an hour later, Moss said three more tables had been occupied and that other patrons had asked activists if they could join them at their tables.

The result, Moss said, was somewhat unexpected.

“They’re striking up conversations and learning why we’re here,” he said.

“So we’re making inroads with their customers.”

The economic impact was apparent as car after car bearing disappointed diners left the parking lot, bound for other eateries in the area. Meanwhile, activists staging the sit-in ordered only drinks during the three-hour period.

Then at 1:30 p.m. activists rose from their tables en masse to pay their checks while chanting, “What do we want? Equal rights! When do we want them? Now!”

— From Query, Vol. 4, No. 33, August, 16, 1991
A Promise Broken

"My name is Rich and I have had numerous sexual relationships with men in my life, but now I'm sort of involved with a woman and I want to be faithful to her..."

With those words, I introduced myself to the other men who were seeking an answer to their questions about sexual orientation. For whatever their reasons, they sought a promise that they would no longer submit to their sexual desires for other men. Their problems accepting their homosexuality had brought the other eight men to Promise, a 24-week program administered by the Nashville-based Christian Counseling Services (CCS). Located in a modest bungalow in East Nashville, CCS is, according to its informational brochures, "a two-fold private non-profit ministry offering counseling and social services...supported primarily by the Christian community of Middle Tennessee."

Promise, a sexual orientation change program, is affiliated with Exodus International, a coalition of evangelical ministries across North America, "dedicated to lifting up the ultimate hope of Jesus Christ to those struggling with homosexuality."

As a reporter, I went undercover as Richard, to learn about the workings of "change therapy," its methodology and techniques, and to learn about the people seeking change and those who hoped to bring it about. My investigation began with telephone calls to several local churches, inquiring about the existence of an Exodus program in Nashville. But before Richard could become part of the group, he would be required to come for individual counseling for at least six weeks, according the Mike Malloy, CCS' executive director. Later, when the group was actually formed, at least four weeks of individual counseling was a prerequisite for membership. Individual counseling was necessary, Malloy said, to determine a person's eligibility for Promise, to "make sure everyone is appropriate to the group."

Some people, he explained, wouldn't feel comfortable in the midst of a group setting, discussing the most intimate details of their lives, while others might be interested in something far different: "You can let your mind go searching for answers.

"My name is William and today has been a really difficult day for me. It was my day off—I'm a preacher—and I wanted more than anything to just go out and pick up some guy," the first man said. "But I didn't do it. I feel like I'm at a crossroads in my life." William, in his mid-30s and pastor of a fundamentalist congregation, is married and the father of two. He had unsuccessfully fought his attraction to other men, finally confessing his feelings to his wife, who had remained supportive throughout. He turned to Promise in order to salvage his marriage and his spiritual and religious selves.

"My name is Steve and the past week actually has been a pretty good one for me," the second man said. "But the next few weeks are going to be difficult. My divorce will be final soon."

Steve told a story of a failed marriage, the consequence of illicit sexual encounters with other men throughout the years. After his wife discovered his "other" life, he was forced to move out and relinquish his family.

"I went from living with my parents to living in a fraternity house while in college. Then we got married right before graduation and I moved in with my wife. She had a child from a previous marriage, so we never really had any time together alone. Now, for the first time in my life, I'm living by myself in an apartment," he said. "I hope I'll be able to change. I've given up hope of ever reconciling with my wife. But I hope I'll be able to have a relation; ship with my children...if I change."

John, a businessman in his late 40s, attributed his involvement in the group to his brother's insistence he seek help and his own belief that only through change could he know a truly Christian experience. "Whenever I see some man who I lust after, I pray for him—I pray that he'll come to know Jesus Christ as his lord and savior," John said.

Another man, Brad, a graduate student in a local college, had never acted on his same-sex desires, but was feeling tempted to succumb to those desires. "I've had a good week, nothing major has happened," Brad said. "Well, you look good," William told him. "You look real good."

"You've really been on my mind this past week, Brad. And I prayed that you would come back tonight," Steve admitted.

The other men told stories of struggles and battles waged against sexual desires for others of their own sex. They reiterated the themes of salvation and redemption as they sought their promised land of heterosexuality.

Then it was my turn. The story I told, as Richard, was one of a young man, currently involved with a woman, who in the past had experienced sexual relations with other men. Now, hoping to marry this young woman, he sought help to eliminate his homosexual tendencies. "And I had been doing well, actually, until last Wednesday. After I left therapy, I drove straight to a bookstore and picked up a man and had sex with him," I said.

The other men, none of whom had strayed over the line during the past week, reacted differently from the way I expected. William nodded understandingly; Steve shook his head; John's face turned red; Brad seemed oddly embarrassed; and the facilitator looked as if he might hit me. "I have to question your commitment to change," he countered.

Debate ensued about Richard's actions and his fitness for the group. Finally, after the session had gone on for two hours, the facilitator adjourned the meeting. My misgivings about attending the meeting and possible discovery of my true identity were, a least momentarily, assuaged. Then, as I started to leave, William approached me: "I think I know you. You look awfully familiar to me," he said.

My undercover assignment, it seemed, may have been cut short.

—From Dare, Vol. 2, No. 20, May 19-25, 1989
A BATTLE OF THE BITCHES

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Minister James Hawk

An openly gay United Methodist minister—a 1990 graduate of Vanderbilt University’s Divinity School—announced in December 1990 that he would publicly challenge the denomination’s ban on the ordination and appointment of “self-avowed, practicing homosexuals.”

James Hawk of Nashville, who was placed on mandatory leave of absence earlier in the year after he announced his sexual orientation to his bishop, George Bashore, and the Western Pennsylvania Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, told Dare in December 1990 that he had sent a letter to the board calling for his appointment to a local church pastorate.

Hawk’s efforts to be assigned a church marked the first time that an openly gay UMC minister had made such an attempt.

“When I first came out as a gay man, my goal was to stay a minister no matter what,” Hawk told Dare. “So, in a meeting with the bishop, I told him I was a ‘self-avowed, practicing homosexual.’”

Hawk said the UMC stance on lesbian and gay clergy runs counter to Christian teaching: “I have a concern when I go out and, when people realize I’m a minister, have them say things like, ‘I’m going to hell and I can’t do anything about it.’ I hope to help people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual realize that their sexuality is a good gift from God.”

More than seven years after his decision, Hawk today heads Nashville’s Stonewall Mission Church. Established in 1992, SMC “was an answer to an unmet need,” Hawk said.

“I had to be a pastor of a church,” he explained. “Five years ago, I think we had a lot of people who were angry at a mainstream church and that brought them to Stonewall. But I don’t think that’s the case now. Today it’s more about supporting a community.

“We started with no doctrine and five years later, we still have no doctrine. Instead, we tend to focus on how we can best serve our community—both the gay and lesbian community and the greater community as a whole.”

For Hawk, his decision to challenge UMC policies in 1990 was a life-changing experience. “How has my life not changed?” he asks rhetorically. “I’ve challenged the church’s stance. I had the opportunity to revitalize Pride. I’ve been able to start a church of my own that is much more liberal than anything I could have imagined ten years ago, and I’ve been involved in a relationship—a marriage of sorts—for the past six years.”

Hawk’s challenge to the UMC hierarchy was a difficult decision at the time he made it, but he now realizes “it was the best thing that could have happened to me.”

“I hated having to make that decision in 1990, but I had to do it,” he said.

The most significant shift Hawk has seen among Tennessee’s lesbian and gay community has been in the sense of cooperation among the state’s activists: “I think we’re all working together better now than ever before. It’s not just a few people doing all the work, but a lot of people coming together. I’m seeing more people out and about, not just at gay events, but around town. There are a lot more rainbow stickers on the bumpers of cars than there were 10 years ago.”

But even as the gay and lesbian community is becoming more visible, Hawk says the community continues to struggle to define itself: “We’re now getting back to a point where we’re struggling for identity. Although HIV is still with us, it is not the same crisis or disaster that we experienced in the late ’80s. HIV is a manageable disease and death is not inevitable. I think lesbians and gay men are continuing to search for who they are and what their community means to them.”

This special Tenth Anniversary issue of Query is the result of the efforts of countless men and women who, over the years, have worked for Dare and Query in a variety of capacities. Stuart Bovin, Jeff Ellis, Jan Lynch, DeWayne Fulton, Carlton Cornett, Ed White, Alan Stevenson, Michael Coffey, Penny Campbell, Steve Wilson, Pacer Smith, Tonda McKay, Aurora Daniels, Jacki Moss, Paro Boswey, Jill Pierce, Charles Colpaert, Jayson Chitwood, Lynn Singer, Robin Landers, Beren deMotier, Susan Jensen, Mubarak Campbell, Steve Wilson, Pacer Smith, Tonda McKay, Aurora Daniels, Jacki Moss, Patti Boosey, Jill Pierce, Joe Hoover, Marvin Liebman, Ace Hancock, F. Lynn Bachleda, Chris Davis, David Farthing, Leslie Guerin-Haines, Michael Sanders, Cyble Mayo, Angela Bryant, Daniel Webster, Melissa Bedinger and many more...
Tennessee Pride: The Volunteer State’s lesbians & gay men let their voices be heard

Afterword

Since 1988, Pride celebrations have been traditional summer events throughout the Volunteer State, with marches held annually in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis and Chattanooga. In 1994, activists from throughout the state gathered in Nashville for a first-ever statewide march, attracting more than 1,400 people.

The day Nashville came out...

Saturday afternoon, following the Pride ’88 festival and rally, I was driving along West End Avenue and saw three small children playing with the pink and aqua balloons from our celebration.

I didn’t recall seeing the children, or the man with them, in the parade or at the rally, so I assumed they were unaware of the significance of the balloons they held. They just kids playing with some helium-filled balloons and probably weren’t that interest in lesbian and gay pride.

Still, in their hands they held our emblems. Though they probably can’t comprehend the ramifications of what “being out the closet” means, the children were nonetheless doing their part to further our cause.

Saturday’s parade, rally and festival were nothing short of miraculous. When plans first began to be made for the celebration, there were a lot of detractors—“it just won’t fly in Nashville, the KKK will be there, all the religious fanatic kooks will be there, blood will be shed some Saturday in June.”—but the week just past proved all those people wrong.

Arriving at Centennial Park Saturday morning was innervating—you know the way you felt as a kid when your parents took you to the county fair and you saw all the rides and the lights and the balloons and the cotton candy—well, that’s how I felt when I saw the festival grounds. Thanks to the radical faeries from Short Mountain, who had transformed the park into an array of colors, I felt transported.

The camaraderie and esprit de corps exhibited by all the folks awaiting the parade’s start at Dragon Park was a first-of-its-kind exhilaration for Nashville’s gay and lesbian community. From the contingent of Unitarian Universalists to Clarksville’s P-Knotts, from the people of MCC to the many straight people marching to show their support of our cause, the parade proved an inspiration for us all. The parade and festival was a courageous attempt to make our presence felt in the city.

Courage—that’s the stuff heroes and dreams are made of. And that’s exactly what the more than 250 people who took part showed the city of Nashville.

“We are everywhere. We will be free,” that’s what the marchers chanted.

And someday we will be free. Saturday’s public acknowledgement of who we are, where we’ve been and where we’re going will be the spark that will light the fires that will lead us to freedom.

We have the people to lead us—women like Penny Campbell and Diane Easter, and men like Paul Tucker and Sam Adams—and with the support of many more individuals, Nashville can effectively lead the way for lesbian and gay civil rights well into the next century.

Personally, Saturday helped to reaffirm the direction of my own activism. Throughout the week, I wrestled with the question of whether I am active because of my own convictions, or if, in essence, I am active because of my lover’s activism? Now, I am certain—I am active because it is vital to survival—not only my survival, or my lover’s survival, but the very survival of us all.

The three children, playing with the pink and aqua Pride ’88 balloons, could well be homosexual. If so, perhaps they will remember that hot Saturday afternoon in June 1988 and the men and women who gave them the brightly colored balloons. It might make coming out of the closet easier for them.

Of course, the children could also be heterosexual. If so, perhaps they still will remember those pink and aqua balloons on that humid June Saturday in 1988 and the men and women who were marching to the park. And maybe they will help to alleviate the heterosexism prevalent in our society. Either way, we—and the children—can dream. Can’t we?
FRIDAY NIGHT: DANCE TO THE MUSIC!
SATURDAY NIGHT: VALERIE RYENOLDS & HER BAND

NEW MENDS AT CHEZ COLETTE!

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FOR 200 YEARS—in fact, ever since Tennessee became a state in 1796—sodomy has been a criminal offense in the Volunteer State. And it wasn't until June 10 of this year that the Homosexual Acts Law was struck down. The statutes, ordinances and common law of the State of North Carolina, of which Tennessee was originally a part, were adopted as the law of Tennessee at the time of statehood.

In 1988, when Abby Rubenfeld announced she would be leaving her position as legal director for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Tennesseans rejoiced because it meant that she would be coming home—to

Tennessee. In the years that have followed her decision, Rubenfeld has been tireless in her efforts to make Tennessee a better place to live for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals—
and heterosexuals.

As co-chair of the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance, Rubenfeld was instrumental in formulating structural changes that were enacted in 1990, thereby making the organization more viable, attracting more members and broadening the organization's base of contributors. Following TGALA's demise, Rubenfeld was among the founders of the Lesbian and Gay Coalition for Justice.

Perhaps most important, however, was Rubenfeld's championing of the decade's most important legal battle: the challenge to Tennessee's same-sex sodomy law. As lead attorney for the plaintiffs, Rubenfeld worked hundreds of hours to convince the courts of the statute's lack of merit.

In 1990, she appeared before a hearing of the Tennessee Sentencing Commission, urging its members to consider a repeal of the state's antiquated sodomy law, speaking eloquently and directly to the members' sense of fair play: "The law of Tennessee, or any other state, has no place in the private bedrooms of its citizens."

Rubenfeld said that the outcome of the legal battle still amazes her: "I am still amazed that we were successful in doing this in Tennessee. When I first started to practice law in Nashville in 1979, I don't think there was any way we could even dream of such a thing happening. It's a stunning victory for not only the gay and lesbian community, but for all Tennesseans because of its importance to the right of privacy of everyone in the state, whether they are heterosexual, gay or lesbian."

As a result of her dedication and involvement, Rubenfeld four times has been named Query's Tennessean of the Year: 1990, 1994, 1995 and 1996, when she shared the title with the sodomy lawsuit plaintiffs.

From Rubenfeld's perspective, much has changed in Tennessee in the past decade. "Certainly, the sodomy law being overturned is a milestone," she muses. "But I think there's also been a huge change in the state judiciary. We have much better judges on the bench in Tennessee now and, as a result, the courts are much more hospitable to gay and lesbian plaintiffs and attorneys."

But other changes are just as significant, Rubenfeld says: "Ten years ago I would never have dreamed that we would have had a gay and lesbian newspaper covering the issues that are important to our community. I think it's all much more closely related than many people might think."

As we enter the new millennium what does Rubenfeld see ahead? "I think the two most important areas in which we will need to work include protecting people on the job and protecting our families. We need to level the playing field in order to allow gay people equal protection in employment. And I think it's extraordinary how many gay and lesbian people have children now. That's certain to be a target of attack from the right wing and we need to be prepared."

Subsequently, during revamping of the state criminal code in 1829, 1858, 1918, 1932, 1934, 1947 and 1982, sodomy remained criminalized. In 1989, during a massive revamping of the Tennessee criminal code, the Tennessee Sentencing Committee...
The successful legal challenge to Tennessee's antiquated same-sex sodomy law

went even further, singling out lesbians and gay men. The commission said that sexual acts between two persons of the same sex was a criminal act, dropping the state's crimes against nature statute.

Instead, "homosexual acts" became a Class C misdemeanor, making it unlawful for "any person to engage in consensual sexual penetration... with a person of the same gender." It was the Tennessee Homosexual Practices Act—that prompted the lawsuit that was filed in May 1988 by attorneys for the five plaintiffs.

What follows is a record of important events that followed the circuitous route through the courts to eventually overturn Tennessee's same-sex specific sodomy law:

► September 1988: Proposed revisions in the Tennessee Criminal Code would eliminate language regarding heterosexual "crimes against nature," but would specifically criminalize all sexual acts between two persons of the same sex. The revision of the law was included in a report directed to the state legislature by a subcommittee of the Tennessee Sentencing Commission. The subcommittee, according to chair David Raybin, was simply following the mandate of state lawmakers to "moderate rather archaic language" that exists in the criminal code. Since the crimes against nature statute was rarely invoked against heterosexuals, TSC members argued for a law more specific in language if the state plans to enforce the ban on homosexual acts.

► October 1988: Proposed revisions in the Tennessee Criminal Code would classify "homosexual acts" and would reduce such "crimes" from a felony (punishable by a prison term of 5 to 15 years and a fine not to exceed $10,000) or a Class C misdemeanor (punishable by a jail term of not more than 30 days, a fine of not more than $50, or both). "The revision would eliminate crimes against nature," Sue R. Cain, executive director of the Tennessee Sentencing Commission, told Query. "But it does leave homosexual acts as a crime."

► February 1989: Tennessee legislators introduced a bill that would "eliminate archaic language" from the state's criminal code, including revisions in the state's sodomy law, as recommended by the Tennessee Sentencing Commission.

► May 1989: By a 23-9 margin, the Tennessee Senate approves revisions in the state's criminal code. "I don't foresee any problem with the governor [Ned McWherter] signing the bill into law," Cain told Query. "I think he's heard me in favor of the bill's passage."

► June 1989: Members of the Tennessee House of Representatives give their approval to the changes in the state's criminal code, passing the way for McWherter's signature to the revisions into state law.

► November 1, 1989: With sweeping changes in the Tennessee Criminal Code going into effect, including the Homosexual Practices Act, which specifically bans sexual acts between two persons of the same gender, Tennessee becomes one of just seven states to have same-sex sodomy laws on the books.

► May 26, 1993: Attorneys for six Tennesseans file suit in Davidson County Circuit Court to mount a legal challenge to the Homosexual Practices Act. Named as defendants in the suit are Tennessee governor Ned McWherter, state attorney general Charles Burson, and Tony Johnson, district attorney for Davidson County. The six plaintiffs are seeking an order declaring the Homosexual Practices Act to be in violation of the Tennessee constitution, and an order "permanently enjoining the enforcement of the Homosexual Acts Statute."

► January 7, 1994: The six plaintiffs in the legal challenge to Tennessee same-sex specific sodomy law are named Queer Tennesseeans of the Year by Queer Tennessee, the Home of the Unnameable personal concern which is at the heart of Tennessee's protection of the right to privacy.

► February 9, 1994: A spokesperson for the state attorney general’s office tells Query that the office will ask the Tennessee Supreme Court to review the Court of Appeals’ January 26 ruling that upheld Kurtz’s 1995 decision. "We are going to seek review by the Tennessee Supreme Court."

► December 7, 1994: Kurtz denies the state's motion for summary judgment requesting dismissal of the lawsuit. "This lawsuit means that attorneys for the state must show a "compelling" interest in the state's right to enforce its own laws, as a result of the state's right to enforce its own sodomy law. "Private sexual activity between consenting adults of the same sex is protected by the state’s constitutional right of privacy," he wrote. "That is the only reason why the law should not be struck down. As it now stands, our ruling will have precedent only in Davidson County."

► December 16, 1994: Kurtz continues the trial date to January 20, following a motion by Rubenfeld, asking for summary judgment in the case.

► January 20, 1995: A packed courtroom of interested observers listen as attorneys for the state—presenting an affidavit from Charles Sadocodes, a New York psychiatrist who maintains that homosexuality is a mental disorder—argue in favor of the sodomy statute. Kurtz denies a motion from June Griffin, a preacher from Dayton, who seeks to intervene in the case because, she said, her "interests were not being represented."

► February 2, 1995: Kurtz rules Tennessee’s Homosexual Practices Act invalid because it violates citizens’ right to privacy guaranteed by the state constitution. "That is the only reason why the law should not be struck down. As it now stands, our ruling will have precedent only in Davidson County."

► March 26, 1996: The Tennessee Attorney General’s office officially files its request for review by the Tennessee Supreme Court. "We are happy to take up the cause once more—if duty calls again."

► April 15, 1996: Attorney Abby Rubenfeld files the "plaintiff’s answer to support of application to appeal," asking members of the state Supreme Court to review the Court of Appeals’ February ruling in the case of Campbell v. SUNOQUIST. "The plaintiffs’ answer in support of the application to appeal the lower court ruling that earlier was filed by the attorney general’s office."

► June 10, 1996: The five members of the Tennessee Supreme Court issue an order which states: "Upon consideration of the application to appeal and the entire record in this case, the application to appeal is denied with the recommendation that the Court of Appeals opinion be published. "That this means, Rubenfeld says, is that the homossexual acts law is now "unchallengeable and unenforceable."

► June 11, 1996: Attorney Abby Rubenfeld files the "plaintiff’s answer to support of application to appeal," asking members of the state Supreme Court to review the Court of Appeals’ February ruling in the case of Campbell v. SUNOQUIST. "The plaintiffs’ answer in support of the application to appeal the lower court ruling that earlier was filed by the attorney general’s office."

► July 1996: The Tennessee Supreme Court orders the attorney general’s office to file an appeal of the case to the United States Supreme Court. "The Supreme Court’s rejection of the application for appeal from Tennessee Attorney General Charles Burson’s office "has the same precedential value as a Supreme Court opinion," Rubenfeld explains. "Because we lost in the Tennessee Supreme Court, we are able to appeal to the United States Supreme Court, " Rubenfeld said.

Sodomy lawsuit plaintiffs

Had it not been for the perseverance, the determination and the courage displayed by the plaintiffs and the attorneys involved in the legal challenge to Tennessee's Homosexual Practices Act, sexual acts between two persons of the same sex would remain a criminal offense, punishable by a $50 fine or imprisonment of up to 30 days.

Penny Campbell, Timothy Huey, Christopher Simian, James Tallent and Jane Doe twice were named Tennesseans of the Year by Query—in 1993 and 1996. In November 1996, the group of individuals were honored by the American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee as its Bill of Rights Award recipients.

Despite the four years of litigation and the glare of media attention, the plaintiffs who talked to Query told the newspaper that they would be more than happy to take up the cause once more—if duty calls again.

"Absolutely wonderful to know that we can challenge the system and make our voices heard," said Tallent, a registered nurse at Baptist Hospital of East Tennessee in Knoxville. Since the lawsuit was filed in 1993, Tallent says he has been heartened by the "tremendous support" he’s gotten from friends, family and co-workers as the suit made its way through the courts.

"The outcome of this lawsuit shows that our complaint was a valid issue," he said. "We showed the people of Tennessee that we, the gay men and lesbians of this state, have had to live with the fear of possibly being arrested for having sex. We should all be glad that the necessary steps were taken to rectify that situation."

Nashvillian Penny Campbell, a longtime community activist, said the lawsuit's outcome has made her more hopeful of what the future holds: "I feel hopeful that this will lead to future legislation that will further protect our civil rights," Campbell said. "I think it's also important to note that with this decision, the Homosexual Practices Act won't be used in custody cases to unfairly take children from gay or lesbian parents."

Would they go through it all again? "Definitely," said Tallent. "And I would want to be more vocal, to speak out in the media more if we had to do it again."

"Of course," Campbell replied. "I'd do whatever it took to get the job done. I feel very fortunate to have been a part of this."

— From Query, Vol. 9, No. 23, June 17, 1996
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NASHVILLE PRIDE 1997

Transsexual kicked out
A transsexual student in Tennessee State University's two-year nursing program says she was "kicked out" of school because someone complained of her transgender status.

Tracy Quiring, a student at the Nashville institution, was informed via a memorandum from nursing school dean Marion Anema, dated October 31, that she will not be able to pursue her nursing education at this time.

According to the memo from Anema, Quiring will not be allowed to continue her studies because "the institution where you were scheduled for clinical experiences this fall will not permit you to continue your clinical rotation because of a gender issue."

Quiring, who began her studies at TSU on August 26, had started her clinical rotation at Nashvile's Park View Hospital on Friday, October 18, as an operating room observer.

"I expected prejudice and discriminatory remarks when I started the program," Quiring admitted. "And I got some from general students on campus, but I got none from within the nursing program. I thought everything was going to be fine. I thought I had mapped out my life for the next several years, having had what she referred to as "some minor surgeries.""

"I had been scheduled for surgery next summer "which would be the earliest I could do it on the schedule I had planned for school and clinical rotations." However, those plans are now on hold because the actions taken by TSU nursing officials."

She had planned to have final reassignment surgery next summer "which would be the earliest I could do it on the schedule I had planned for school and clinical rotations."

However, those plans are now on hold because of the actions taken by TSU nursing officials.

Boycott shows little effect thus far on Disney
Books, records, movies, licensing agreements, a major television network, a cable channel, newspapers, TV stations and theme parks from California to Japan, Florida to France—those are just a few of the products or holdings of The Walt Disney Company, the Burbank, California-based entertainment conglomerate that has been targeted by members...
The people, places and events that shaped our lives during the past ten years

of the Southern Baptist Convention for a boycott.

In Tennessee, however, where the 13-member SBC has its headquarters, Disney's only business presence is the popular Disney Stores, one in Memphis and two in Nashville.

A sales clerk at the Disney Store in Memphis, located in Oak Court Mall, said that business there had been unaffected by the boycott.

Citing Disney's extension of health care and other benefits to the same-sex partners of company employees, the Southern Baptists overwhelmingly voiced their approval of a boycott. But can they pull it off?

Entertainment analysts, stock brokers—even President Clinton—say a boycott will have little, if any, effect on Disney. In fact, save for a minor slip-page of one percent in the price of shares in Disney stock, the company remains one of the more consistent performers on the New York Stock Exchange, according to a spokesperson for Merrill Lynch's New York City office.

Jessica Reif, entertainment analyst for Merrill Lynch, told Query that the Southern Baptist boycott of Disney, barely two weeks old, has shown no signs of success and is already off the board support from even the most conservative of Americans.

"Disney is a very well-known company and its stock performs consistently," she said.

"If this boycott is actually carried out, it should have little or no longterm financial effect on the company."

— From Query, Vol. 9, No. 26, June 28, 1996

TEA president Kathy Woodall, who failed to return repeated phone calls from Query, told the Nashville Banner earlier this week that her organization will lose about 1,000 members because of the vote on the resolution.

"It caused a lot of our continuing members some concern," Woodall told The Banner.

"The ban does not affect the employees of our stores across the country. In fact, we have added an additional 50,000 teachers."

— From Query, Vol. 9, No. 26, June 28, 1996

Teachers' head: gay gay and lesbian history

Despite some claims to the contrary, teachers are not deserting the Tennessee Education Association by the hundreds because of a resolution adopted this summer at the National Education Association convention that proclaims October as Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual History Month.

In fact, TEA membership rolls show more members are on the rolls now than were listed at the same time last year.

According to TEA membership director Elaine Jewett, current membership in the organization stands at close to 43,000, out of the state's estimated 50,000 teachers.

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— From Query, Vol. 9, No. 26, June 28, 1996

Adams 'prime suspect' in Overstreet murder

Metro Nashville homicide detectives announced Monday that David Adams has become the prime suspect in their investigation of the slaying last March of his lover, Aaron Overstreet.

That revelation was just one part of the information authorities shared with reporters during a press conference held at Nashville's Criminal Justice Center.

Police also revealed that an attack on Adams last April was a apparent hoax—set up by Adams and an accomplice—and that during the past two months Adams had allegedly been involved in a counterfeit check scam operating throughout Middle Tennessee and South Central Kentucky.

"When we began investigating the murder of Aaron Overstreet, we had no leads," said Murder Squad detective Mike Smith.

"We talked with Mr. Adams soon after the body was identified, but he refused to cooperate after that."

Smith said that authorities considered Adams a suspect at the time, but "couldn't go forward due to a lack of evidence."

— From Date, Vol. 3, No. 51, December 24, 1990

DeGeneres' coming out episode scores with viewers

In a funny, touching, frank episode aired on ABC affiliates across the country—save for one holdout in Birmingham—sitcom star Ellen DeGeneres and her fictional alter ego Ellen Morgan came out of the closet with a bang last week.

In fact, the April 30 episode of Ellen—in which the lead character finally acknowledged her sexual orientation after months of speculation, media frenzy and enough controversy to keep Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and company foaming at the mouth for months—became the network's highest-rated program of the year, claiming a 23.4 rating and the number one slot among all the programs on broadcast TV last week.

In Nielsen's overnight ratings, which track viewers habits in the top 37 broadcast markets in the country, Ellen scored even higher—a 26.5 rating and a 37 percent share of the TV audience.

"You can safely say the network is pleased with the performance," said ABC spokesperson Anne Riccielli.

But Ellen, the series is still on the bubble—ABC executives have yet to say if the show will return next season (although it's expected to be renewed) and the ratings for the final two episodes may determine the show's fate.

Should Ellen's coming out prove to be more than a ratings ploy and the final two episodes also fare well with viewers, the controversial decision could solidify the show's standing with viewers and advertisers.

Prior to the history-making coming out episode, Ellen ranked 37th for the season, with an average rating of 9.7.

Just two years ago, Ellen was the 13th-ranked show on television.

— From Query, Vol. 10, No. 9, May 9, 1997

Chattanooga: Gay and lesbian alliance forms

Seeking to effect a change in the quality of life and to challenge the mainstream community's perceptions of homosexuals, a group of lesbian and gay activists met in Chattanooga last Friday night to form the nucleus of a new organization.

Calling themselves the Chattanooga Gay and Lesbian Alliance, the dozen women and men met to discuss the pros and cons of organizing and to plan a recruiting drive for new members.

"I think it's time we let Chattanooga know we're here," said Alliance chair Andrew Gilford. "People in Chattanooga have waited long enough. I really think it's time to do something."

— From Date, Vol. 2, No. 47, November 24, 1989

Talk show hell: Jones, Amenede and Schmitz

On Thursday, March 9, a 32-year-old gay man named Scott Amedure was gunned down in his suburban Detroit living room.

The man who now stands accused of killing Amedure—and who confessed to the slaying in a 911 phone call just minutes after the horrible incident—is a 24-year-old self-monitored heterosexual named Jonathan Schmitz.

Just three days earlier, Amedure had admitted to a "secret crush" on Schmitz during a taping on The Jenny Jones Show, the nationally syndicated daytime talk show that now ranks third in the Nielsen ratings among such programs.

"You have to be flattered," Jones reportedly said to Schmitz after Amedure was identified as his secret admirer.

"Yes, but I'm a heterosexual," Schmitz replied.

"I'm not interested," Schmitz said he was surprised and embarrassed by Amedure's very public admission of romantic and sexual interest, and told investigators that he had felt "almost sick to my stomach" by the revelation.

According to authorities, three days after the taping, Schmitz bought a shotgun and ammunition (telling the salesperson he was planning a hunting trip with his father) and drove to Amedure's mobile home and shot him twice in the chest.

The episode has become the ladder for numerous mainstream news accounts, commentaries and editorials and will likely be considered as a talk show topic itself in the not so distant future.

Most of those mainstream accounts have focused on Schmitz's reaction of acute embarrassment and humiliation instead of seeing the incident for what it really is: yet another violent, homophobic attack on an openly gay man.

— From Query, Vol. 8, No. 12, March 24, 1995

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Choreographer Paul Vasterling

Paul Vasterling insists, in his typically humble and even a little self-deprecating way, that his burgeoning career as a choreographer—after an already stellar career as a dancer—was the result of his "being in the right place at the right time."

"I never really knew I could make a career out of it," he admits.

In fact, Vasterling came to Nashville Ballet in 1989, dancing for two years before a back injury forced his retirement. Subsequently, he became an instructor at the School of Nashville Ballet and it was there, under Edward Myers' guidance, that he was given his first opportunity to choreograph.

"Eddie allowed me to choreograph a piece for the students of the school which led to a workshop with the company," he explains. "It was very well-received and he encouraged me to choreograph more."

Now, with artistic director Benjamin Houlk on board at Nashville Ballet, Vasterling's work is showcased even further. In the 1997-98 season alone, Vasterling's stunning reinterpretation of "Firebird" was the highlight of the Fall Series, while the revival of his "This Heart," set to the music of Nanci Griffith, was spotlighted in the winter series.

Vasterling's work tends to be very personal, perhaps even introspective: "How does this relate to me? How does this relate to my life?" Those are the questions I ask myself when coming up with a concept.

Vasterling tends to be inspired by "interpersonal relationships—how people relate to each other." As a choreographer, Vasterling excels in bringing to the stage a fresh vision that is at once somewhat subversive and completely accessible to audiences.

Witness his "Firebird": Set in a contemporary utopia, it featured the variety of relationships found in real life, from the traditional boy/girl pairings most often seen in ballets to the refreshing use of same-sex couples to interpret his vision.

Yet while "Firebird" was brought so vividly to life in its contemporary setting, Vasterling realizes it remains a work in progress: "After the performance last fall something was pointed out to me that I'll definitely change the next time it is performed."

Community and a sense of building a consensus is the theme of Vasterling's "Firebird" and as the dancers create their own vision of Utopia they express their acceptance and love of one another. At the very end, they gesture to the audience, inviting the onlookers to join them in their utopia paradise.

However, while same-sex couples were a part of the piece's earlier movements, in the finale the dancers were paired in standard boy/girl couples.

"They were supposed to be in Utopia, but the message was that Utopia didn't allow same-sex couples," he fears, pledging to restage the ending for future performances.

But Nashville Ballet's traditionally conservative audiences might not have noticed this new view of life, so seamless was Vasterling's staging of the piece—and so preoccupied were they by his superb choreography and completely fresh restaging of a classic work.

"Dance is metaphorical," Vasterling says. "It's not literal." And it is that metaphorical nature of his art that allows the choreographer to bring his vision to the dancers who will perform the piece.

"You have to be able to communicate to the dancers what you're striving for," he explains. "I tend to work from a very emotional place and so I often tell the dancers how this relates to me and to their lives, as well."

It's all a part of what Vasterling sees as an element of the emerging personality of Nashville Ballet, as it affirms its place among the nation's top ballet companies. "I want us to do more work that pushes the envelope," he muses. "We're not that big—we'll be doing Swan Lake this spring, but in our own way. I want us to have a voice that is distinct."

Vasterling, who very clearly has something to say through his choreography, says he plans to continue to make his home in Tennessee while continuing to work with ballet companies throughout the country.

"I like living in Nashville, and I especially like that the community—especially the gay community—has changed so much since I first came here," the New Orleans native says.
"Honesty, it was awful. I felt like they overemphasized everything. I would have rather kept the reunion simpler. It was very uncomfortable, but that's what a talk show is all about."
—Female impersonator Danielle Hunter, a favorite on Tennessee stages, talks about her experience as a guest on the syndicated Jerry Springer Show, during which she was reunited with her sister—after an estrangement of almost five years. (March 24, 1995)

"They've shown, over the course of the season that Ellen's been struggling with it—just as most of us have done at some time in our lives. They've shown that it's not easy. Dealing with sexuality is not something like 'it's fine, no problem.' Ellen has shown the American public that it's a gradual process."
—Knoxville therapist Rick Sawyer talks about Ellen DeGeneres' decision to come out on her ABC sitcom. (May 2, 1997)

"We had two protesters carrying picket signs outside the station yesterday. There was even a woman dressed up as a 'sodomite sympathizer.' But I'm just doing my job. When I do start saying I don't like fat, red-head people or skinny blond-headed people, so I'm not going to run any shows that have characters like that? People have their own convictions and beliefs, but in my opinion they don't have the right to push their will on someone else."
—Jerry Linterfeld, general manager for WTVY in Chattanooga, talks about public reaction to his decision to air the controversial Ellen coming-out episode. (April 25, 1997)

"As someone who has come of age within the biggest urban center in the world, I've been taking on urban gay legends and myths. Like many others, I had a number of preconceived notions, but in talking to people from smaller cities, I've found that what many of us see as 'the way men are' is not necessarily the same. In smaller cities and rural areas, people are constructing their relationships differently, there's much more intergenerational mixing and a lot of differences that are apparent in the urban gay centers of New York, West Hollywood, Miami and San Francisco."
—Author/journalist Michelangelo Signorile, keynote speaker for Nashville's Pride '97 Celebration, talks about some of the findings included in his book. Life Outside. (June 28, 1996)

"I never really thought of myself as being in the closet. I was lucky to have parents who were both very liberal-minded and all of my friends in high school were accepting of my sexual orientation. So, I was probably as out as any person who is not a public figure could be. I didn't actually go into the closet until I was outed.

"I think coming out is the most important thing we can do for our own self-assurance and mental and physical health. For the community at large, it's important we come out and show them we can be normal kids."
—Lesbian actress Chastity Bono talks about her acknowledgement of her homosexuality and her parents' reaction to her revelation. (February 2, 1996)

"I think many people know they can trust me, that I won't reveal their sexual orientation if they don't want me to. In fact, in this business you usually know who is gay and who isn't—and who is comfortable with having that information made public knowledge. People know I'll treat them fairly."
—Entertainment Tonight correspondent Garrett Glaser discusses his role as an openly gay reporter in Hollywood. (February 2, 1996)

"When we come out we show people that they do know someone who is gay. They can see the discrimination we face. For fartoooling we have been an invisible population and when you are invisible you open yourself up to all sorts of discrimination and biases. We must show the public that we're not some three-headed freaks from the wrong side of town from bad families."
—Activist Candace Gingrich, sister to Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, explains why coming out is so important. (June 25, 1995)

"I remember that first day in class when we were doing improvisation and I got up and made everybody laugh. I had always been funny, when you grow up a sissy, you try to make people laugh so they won't beat you up—you know, someone would throw a ball at me and I'd scream and dodge it and they'd laugh. But when I was in that class, it hit me like a thunderbolt, 'I am home.' and so that was how I decided what I wanted to do.

"Mama says I was always in stores pulling out my pee-pee or spitting on the floor to get attention. I had a twin sister who was just beautiful—china blue eyes, blonde curls just like Shirley Temple—and who got all the attention. I just couldn't bear it."
—"Recovering Southern Baptist" Leslie Jordan, the comic TV actor (Murphy Brown, Soap, N' Space and the autobiographical off-Broadway play Hysterical Blindness and Other Southern Tragedies That Have Plagued My Life Thus Far) originally from Chattanooga, talks about an Intro to Drama class he took at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. (July 15, 1994)

"Basically, (the Family Institute's involvement) is not so much that the sodomy law is something that we want to be engaged in. But to have the law on the books is a way of blocking attempts by the homosexual community to have same-sex marriages approved in Tennessee, or to gain other special rights or privileges that are currently not in our criminal code."
—Jeff Whitesides, executive director of the Tennessee-based Family Institute, explains to Query why his organization was raising funds to fight to keep the state's same-sex sodomy law on the books. (February 3, 1995)

"I try to keep my finger on the cilt of what's going on in the dyke world. I hate all this political correctness. I'm so over it. You know how 'poids' is the other white meat? Well, now beef wants to be called 'meat of color.' In the gay and lesbian community, we spend so much time yelling at each other, we never get anything done. We spend so much time trying to decide on what's correct that we're not really saying anything."
—Outrageous comedian actor Lea DeLaria. (February 17, 1995)

"Winona fucking Ryder? For best actress? Please! Whose dick is she fucking? If she's so beautiful, just let me pay my seven bucks and give me an 8x10 glossy of her and then let a real actress do the movie."
—More from DeLaria, this time weighing in on the 1995 Oscar nominations. (February 17, 1995)

"Just tap into the power you have inside yourself to become the wonderful creation you are. We are all a part of the power that created the universe."
—Words of wisdom from RuPaul, supermodel of the world and the glamour gal of the 90s. (September 29, 1995)

"I like the writing part because I get to express myself that way, but in live performance you get to see people's faces and watch their reactions. You get different reactions from different crowds and as I cross over, it's kind of strange. In mixed crowds, a lot of people sit there and drink their beer and just listen to me singing, but in gay clubs, people are dancing all over the place and really getting into the music."
—Dance music diva Crystal Waters. (October 21, 1994)
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AN APPLE A DAY
Taking care of yourself is the key

Lesbians have long neglected our health matters, and it is time we began to pay attention to our health.
Your health involves not only your physical well being, but also your spiritual and emotional well being. And health isn't something to think about only during periods of illness. In fact, one of the most important components of health is wellness— or disease prevention.
Research tells us that the lesbian population as a whole is less likely to seek preventive care or treatment for illness than other segments of the population.

First, the lesbian community needs education that our health matters and secondly, the issues of sexism and heterosexism must be addressed.
The debut of this column is tied to those issues. Because of interest in education of the lesbian community and to address the heterosexism of women's health, Planned Parenthood of Middle Tennessee (PPMT) has begun a project to specifically target health care to the lesbian community.
The PPMT staff has been in training since November, learning to be culturally sensitive and creating awareness of lesbian health issues.
Women may choose not to seek regular health care visits because of one or two bad experiences with insensitive providers. This is the first issue that was addressed with the PPMT staff.

PPMT is becoming a culturally sensitive health care provider for all health care consumers. Our sensitivity is directed toward all clients, by embracing lesbian issues, we have become more culturally aware to all women's and men's needs in health care.

You may be asking yourself: "What are lesbian health care issues?" Typically, they are health care issues for every woman. Women need regular pelvic and pap exams, breast exams and general health physical to include lab evaluation. The frequency with which these exams occur is based in large part on the results of the previous exam.
After two to three years of regular, normal exams, a healthy individual may have a full exam every two years, after consultation with the provider.
It is very important to establish a relationship with a primary health care provider. That provider should know your entire medical history.
You should feel comfortable with the provider so you can freely disclose information about your sexuality and sexual practices. The provider should also be comfortable with the information you share about your sexuality.
In a relationship with a provider, you should expect to be able to discuss your family unit, issues about children and issues about relationships. Your primary provider will be your reference source to specialists, not only in medicine, but also in mental health. PPMT is prepared to be that primary provider.

There are many pressing topics for women's health, issues like breast cancer, cervical cancer, dysfunctional uterine bleeding, AIDS, chronic illness, high blood pressure, diabetes, weight loss, smoking cessation, menopause, fertility, depression, mental illness, terminal illness, and death and dying.
These topics and others will be addressed in this column. I would also encourage you to write with your questions so this column may also serve as a forum for your issues.
PPMT will be sponsoring a "Lesbian Health Fair" on Saturday, April 11 at 4 p.m. (CT) at the Women's Choice Bar/Your Way Cafe in Nashville. Health screening will be done that day and we'll have information about PPMT and the services we offer.
I suspect that many of you are thinking, "Planned Parenthood and lesbian health in the same sentence?" PPMT is a comprehensive provider of health care with a special emphasis on women's issues.

What better place for a women's clinic with a desire to be known as the place for lesbians to go for comprehensive health care.

Editor's Note: Kate Moore is a Nashville-based registered nurse with a Master of Science degree in nursing and is a certified registered nurse-practitioner. If you have questions for this column, send them to: Your Health Matters, Query, Box 26241, Nashville, Tennessee 37202.

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• Have you been the victim of anti-lesbian or anti-gay violence? Call the U.S. Justice Dept's hate crimes hotline toll free: (800) 347-HATE (4283)

Groups
• Nashville Association of Professional Friends, a business networking group for gay men is forming now! Network with other gay businessmen in a discreet and professional environment. Call (615) 214-2031.
• The Stonewall Mission Church: A progressive Christian community meeting for worship Sunday evenings at 6:30 pm (703 Berry Rd, Nash). For further details, contact the Rev James Hawk at (615) 269-3480.

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AIN'T NOBODY'S BUSINESS Athletic, muscu­
lous, good, masc. Head, chested, 5'7, 180lbs, with black hair and Hazel eyes, is very conser­
vative and in the closet. I don't smoke, drink, or go to the clubs. I'm inter­
ested in meeting a similar guy for a possible relationship. (Knoxville) 12859

LIKE TO HIKE? I'm a Professional Male, 40, book 26, 6', 4", with a good body. I'm inter­
ested in meeting the outdoors, hiking, music, and going out. I'm looking for friendship, so let's get to­gether and have a good time. (Bristol) 13269

PEAS IN A PUD I'd like to meet some easy going, friendly guys, to hang out with. I'm a 20-year old, White male, 5'/8, 140lbs, with short, Brown hair and Brown eyes. If a relationship develops, great. (Knoxville) 15297

DOWN ON THE FARM My partner and I live on a farm just outside of Knoxville. We're both mid 40-s, 110lbs, with curly blonde hair, and mustache. We're light smokers and drinkers into kick­
ing back, relaxing, and having some good times. We'd like to meet other laid back men into the same style of life. (Clarksville) 12713

NO STRINGS FUN This 24-year old Male, 5'11", 140 lbs., seeks Gay males, 18-23, for good times, hanging out, and maybe more. You never know. (Nashville) 16117

LETS PLAY HOUSE This masculine White male top, 6'1", 210 lbs., seeks a feminine bottom playing off. Transvestites, cross­
dressed and shaved bottoms encouraged to respond. (Nashville) 16802

OPPORTIS ATTRACT Me: top, tall, 6',210 lbs., masculine. You: shorter, bottom, smaller, less masculine. Clean drawn body is a plus. (Nashville) 15764

OPPORTUN KN OX This attractive, pro­
fessional, very discreet, White male, 36, likes to have sexual fun with other mascu­
line men, I'm especially interested in androgynous and Bi guys. (Knoxville) 12760

LOW HANGERS This rugged, attractive, Bi, White male, seeks other fun guys to have good times with. (Jackson) 12549

TENDER HEART This open minded, Gay, Black male, seeks a sincere, honest, trust­
worthy friend, who is not ashamed of what people may say. I hope we can share our­selves and build a relationship. Looks are important, just the feeling counts. Let's be friends. I'm willing, are you? (Nashville) 11430

COUNTRY MAN I'm a good looking, 36 year old, White male, 6'2, 250 lbs., with Brown hair, Blue eyes, and a handlebar mustache. I enjoy driving muscle cars, horseback riding, quiet evenings, and more. I'm hoping to meet someone around our age that has similar interests. (Gatlinburg) 13598

ORAL FIXATION? This good looking, well­
edowed, 27 year old, White male needs to meet a guy into oral sex. (Columbia) 12223

TALK TO ME and my partner, in our 30-s, 190 lbs., with blaze red hair, and blue eyes. I've never been with a Transsex, but I'd like to meet one. Let's be discrete. (Nashville) 14977

WORK IT OUT This 35-year old Gay male, 6', 170 lbs., is searching for another HIV­
positive, Black male. You: around age 40 on the phone, with the pos­sibility of a follow-up friendship or relation­
ship later on. (Nashville) 12817

DOW N TO EArTH This attractive profes­sional White male, 3'1", medium build, with brown hair and eyes seeks a nice build, 20-25 year old, very well built. (Nashville) 13368

LOOKING FOR MR. RIGHT? I'm looking for a gentleman between the ages of 25 to 45. (Knoxville) 15305

HARRY BROWN SKIN Good looking, slen­
der, Haitian male, 28, 5'8, 165lbs, with Black hair, Brown eyes, light Brown skin, and a nice build. I'm very discreet and in the closet, bottom. I'd like to meet a slender, attractive White, around my age, who enjoys travel, dinner out, and more. (Nashville) 12177

BUTCH IT UP, DUDE I'm a Black male, just moved to Nashville, looking for a Hispanic or Black male, for a friendship that may lead to special relationship, I'm thin built, straight acting, Black, and nice looking. Please be straight acting also. (Nashville) 13329

WHEN YOU NEED IT BAD I love helping Bi and Straight males get off. I'm a good look­
ing, discreet, White male, 5'5, 145lbs, with Brown hair, Green eyes, and a nice build. I'm into oral sex and love being a bottom. Use me. (Nashville) 13439

BLACK BULLDOG I want to meet attrac­tive, White studs, under 28, who are attrac­tive, caring, honest, and who want a rela­tion­ship. This good looking, romantic, easy to get along with, 28 year old, Black male, 61, 250lbs, with Brown eyes, a mustache and goatee, can't wait to meet you. I enjoy movies, dancing, sports, boxing, skateing, and a whole lot more. (Nashville) 13412

GO LOOKS This very good looking, model type, from California, in my mid thirties, ready and willing to meet a great Transsex to have lots of fun with. You definetly won't be disappointed. (Nashville) 14142

MOTORCYCLE MADNESS They call me big Al, 200 lbs., in search of another HIV­
positive, Black male. You: around age 30 on the phone, with the possibility of a follow-up friendship or relationship later on. (Nashville) 14320

WORK IT OUT III This 40-year-old Gay male, 6', 170 lbs., is searching for another HIV­
positive, Black male. You: around age 40 on the phone, with the possibility of a follow-up friendship or relationship later on. (Nashville) 12817

STRAIGHT ACTING, Black male, 25-35, for dinner and a night out. I'm into oral sex and love being a bottom. I also own my own business. If you're interested, please leave me a message. (Nashville) 13281

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE who enjoys all this and more. I'm a light smoker and drinker , but I'm very feminine. (Nashville) 14223

I'LL BE BACK YOU ARE a 42-year-old Gay White Female, hustler on the outside but feminine within. I'm a music lover, especially rock and country, and I sing backup on bands. I'm hoping to find an older, very butch Woman who is my nonogynous, someone who's creative, kind, witty, romantic, and cute, and who wants to be in a polyamorous relationship. I'd like to meet a Partner to share my life, if possible. (Nashville) 12842

LET'S TRY IT! This Bi Professional Female, early 40's, seeks an exciting, discrete Bi Female to try new things with. I'm a light smoker, and having fun with the person I'm with. (Nashville) 16946

LIGHT THE CANDLES I'm a tomboyish Gay White Female, 31, 5'7, 135 lbs, with blond hair and brown eyes. I enjoy the out­doors, boating, camping, shopping, movies, sanc­
dering, and good conversation over a few drinks. I'm searching for a feminine, clean Woman over 35 who enjoys all this and more. (Nashville) 16946

FREE THE FANTASIES The Professional Bi Females, 43, 5', 135 lbs, with long blond hair and blue eyes. I'm into both butch and femme. (Nashville) 16946

CURL YOUR TOES This forty-plus, com­
pact, cute, working class, soft butch, quiet women, in the law enforcement field, seeks a calling, sweet femme, who will treat me right. If you like animals and camping, and are seeking a committed relationship, that will suit your toes, try me. (Knoxville) 13200

TRAVELING THE BI-WAYS My beautiful blond, blue-eyed wife, 34, 5'4, 36D chest, clean-shaven, needs a Woman to teach her Bi ways. She's shy, but very willing to learn. I enjoy travel frequently throughout the Southeast. (Knoxville) 16251

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For Sale

- **MEN'S AND LADIES ALTERNATIVE FRAGRANCES**: A big 3.3 oz bottle for just $4. Send this ad for order form to TNR Sales, P.O. Box 5157, Sevierville, TN 37864.


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- **FOR THE LATEST IN LESBIAN MERCHANDISE**: Send $1 & SAS by envelope to Spike's Stuff, 307 Adair St C-4, Decatur GA 30030. $1 OFF 1ST ORDER.

**Money Matters**

- **As seen in February's Success magazine**: Join billionaire son Teddy Turner Jr! Expanding ground-floor technology and broadcasting giant into Tennessee area. Leaders and managers needed. Sensational earnings at home. PT/FT. Call (615) 867-4730 or (888) 859-9010.

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- **Hair Stylist Wanted**: Do you feel like... take a number, take a seat? Take charge, change that. You deserve more. Booth rental or commission plus benefits. Call Cheryl (615) 883-7767.

- **New Hiring**: Illusions is now hiring for all positions (bartenders, servers, barbacks, cooks) at Nashville's newest bar. Call (615) 871-0500 for an appointment.

**Personals**

- **GM, 6', 160, Knoxville, enjoys music, UT sports, travel, dining out, evenings at home. Seeks similar, LTR, 30-45. Romantic, sincere, caring man. I've had a viral load for 18 months. Healthy, active. lsl 911.**

- **Open the door to your mystery date**: GWPM seeks attractive, intelligent, creative, amusing GW, 22-35 for dating fun. Isn't there someone out there who enjoys going out to the theatre or to a movie, the ballet or opera, a concert, an art opening, a cocktail party or maybe just out to dinner? This really nice guy promises he won't be a dud! 8 910.

- **A Man's Man**: GW, Very active, 5'10', 180 lbs. Attractive, rugged looks, sensitive, romantic, honest, Godly, seeks committed male to share life and love. Strictly masculine. 30 to 40. No games. No drugs. Prefer photo. lsl 909.

- **Nashville-area GW**, 40, seeks GW for dating fun. ME: Professional & hard-working, financially secure, relatively intelligent, ingratiatingly polite, healthy, with a great sense of humor and a strong sense of self—an all-around nice guy who's blond, green-eyed & 6'1”. YOU: Between 21 and 40, confident, secure and in search of a good time—and it wouldn't hurt if you were good-looking and a lot of fun to be around. Write me. 8 908.

- **WM, 31, tall, handsome seeks GW M 18-35, shy, extends type, for friendship. Letter/photos/phone. 8 905.**
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**MONDAY**
Movie Night at 7 pm • 25¢ Draft All Night

**TUESDAY**
Killer Karaoke
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**WEDNESDAY**
50¢ Draft Beer All Night

**THURSDAY**
Karaoke with Steve Mogck at 10 pm
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Hot Men in Town for Conductors’ Anniversary

**Track XVI**

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Silver Stirrup Restaurant
with Magnolia’s Home Cooking
Opening Tuesday, March 24

Menu for Sunday, March 29
Country Back BBQ Ribs
Green Beans or BBQ Baked Beans
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Tom Watkins’ Chess Pie
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Mondays Are MADNESS
With 25¢ Draft Beer! & Movie at 7 p.m.!

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Tuesdays & Thursdays: KARAOKE
with Steve,
10 p.m.–Close.
Come Out & Be A Star!

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$1.75 LONGNECKS FOR ANYONE IN LEATHER
GREAT MUSIC
SEPARATE PATIO BEYOND THE MAZE
WHERE THE MEN ARE MEN AND KNOW WHAT THEY WANT
A TRUE MEN’S LEATHER BAR OPEN 10–3 Fri & Sat Nights
PROPER ATTIRE REQUIRED: LEATHER, JEANS AND T-SHIRT,
NO SHIRT, UNIFORMS, CONSTRUCTION, BEARS, COWBOYS, MEN!

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**The Rita Ross Show**

Guests: Tina Louise, Raquel Scott & Special Guest
Showtime: 11 pm & 12:30 am

**Come join us on Hump Day & enjoy a show!**

**Thursday, April 2**

**Bianca Paige & The Jewel Box Revue**
in the Trophy Room
with co-hosts Dakota St. James & Calpernia Addams
Showtime: 11 pm
Start the weekend off a day early!

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**Friday Night Is Leather Night**

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GREAT MUSIC
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WHERE THE MEN ARE MEN AND KNOW WHAT THEY WANT
A TRUE MEN’S LEATHER BAR OPEN 10–3 Fri & Sat Nights
PROPER ATTIRE REQUIRED: LEATHER, JEANS AND T-SHIRT,
NO SHIRT, UNIFORMS, CONSTRUCTION, BEARS, COWBOYS, MEN!

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