

Dare

free!

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 30

THE GAY AND LESBIAN NEWSPAPER

OCTOBER 14-20, 1988



Six of 20 Nashville activists prepare to enter the marriage bureau and ask the Metro Nashville/Davidson County clerk to issue them marriage licenses. The symbolic protest was part of National Coming Out Day activities. From left are Merle Franklin, Linda Goss, Diane Neel, Ann Taylor, Carole Cunningham and Laura Tek. —STAFF PHOTO

Feds Extend AIDS Drug Help

By BRIAN KELLY
Contributing Writer

President Reagan last week signed a bill authorizing a six-month extension of the Federal AIDS Drug Reimbursement program designed to provide AZT to low-income patients. In an unusual partnership between government and private industry, Burroughs-Wellcome, the exclusive maker of AZT, agreed to give \$5 million to the program, with \$10 million coming from the government.

However, none of the \$10 million approved will be new money. Sen. Lowell Weicker [R-Connecticut] had tried to attach an additional subsidy to a supplemental apopropriation bill, but "was not able to get money in the appropriation process," according to Sherry Hayes, legislative aide to Sen. Paul Simon [D-Illinois].

Instead, the money will be "reprogrammed" from existing AIDS programs within the Department of Health and Human Services [HHS] budget. It is not yet known what areas of the HHS budget will be trimmed down to make room for the allocation. "By February or March [HHS] should be able to identify how they're running with this program," Hayes said. However, because of the extension, states have the authorization to make expenditures under the program.

Additionally, Hayes said, the states can, under Medicaid, make a 50-50 contribution to the program at the higher eligibility ceiling for the Federal program, and do not have to be restricted to Medicaid guidelines.

A letter sent by Simon to HHS Secretary Otis Bowen asked that the program be continued, calling it "unfortunate" that Congress had failed to give additional money. The letter continues, "From a medical perspective it seems somewhat self-defeating and inhumane to abandon the only course of treatment available to those who have been provided access to AZT under this program."

Simon also conferred with Sen. Edward M.

Kennedy [D-Massachusetts] about the possibility of creating a block grant program for AZT within the current AIDS Policy Act bill which has been passed by both houses of Congress and is now being worked over. "That's a gleam in people's eyes right now," Hayes said, adding that the block grant program would probably have to wait until the next Congress to be voted on.

[The AIDS Policy Act, as the \$1.2 billion bill is known, is being held up by several amendments insisted upon by Sen. Jesse Helms [R-North Carolina], including mandatory notification of spouses when HIV infection in one spouse is found. As of Oct. 5, Helms had reversed his stand on spousal notification, and instead asked Kennedy to drop the entire confidentiality section of the testing bill. There is concern that the bill may be whittled down from an education, research and testing bill to what appears to be little more than a research bil. "We are to our limit negotiating with Mr. Helms," Hayes said. "We have compromised as far as we can."]

The original bill creating the AIDS Drug Reimbursement program, sponsored by Weicker and Sen. Lawton Chiles [D-Florida] last year, called upon the states to take over funding of the program.

It was a one-time allotment of \$30 million scheduled to run one year, from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30. However, since then only three states and the District of Columbia have begun a non-Medicaid based AZT subsidy using state funds. The Federal program was intended for patients whose incomes were too high for state Medicaid but who could not afford the high cost of AZT.

Currently, AZT treatment costs about \$8000 a year. The program allows all AIDS drugs to be reimbursed, but currently only AZT has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration and hence is the only drug eligible.

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Nashville and U.S. Homos Celebrate, Remember

By STUART BIVIN
Editor

Ten same-sex couples applied for marriage licenses at the Metro clerk's office Tuesday as part of a celebration of National Coming Out Day (NCOD). The group, sponsored by the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA), asked the clerk to issue them licenses in protest of a recent opinion issued by former Tennessee Attorney General Michael Cody.

The clerk's office, which had advance notice of the protest, refused to issue the licenses, citing the opinion and providing copies of it to each couple as they approached the desk. The well-organized protest met with no resistance and there were no incidents. The mood in the clerk's office was businesslike and nonconfrontational as activists and officials repeated the pattern of polite request and equally polite denial.

T-GALA's Penny Campbell and Gary Bellamy, local organizers for NCOD, said that the protestors did not expect the clerk to issue the licenses, but wanted to demonstrate the inequity of a legal system that does not recognize the legitimacy of same-sex relationships.

"While we did not really expect to be granted the licenses, the action was a symbolic

gesture of our desire to have our bonding recognized by government agencies and society," Campbell said. "There are literally thousands of lesbians and gay men in the middle Tennessee area who live in long-term, committed relationships with their same-sex lovers. It is unfair that they are denied the social and legal rights heterosexual couples receive, not to mention tax and spousal work-related benefits."

Bellamy warned that the lack of governmental recognition for same-sex relationships could have devastating consequences for those involved in such relationships.

"If one person in the relationship should become ill or be involved in an accident, the other member of the relationship has no legal right of guardianship or the right to participate in decisions affecting the lover's life," Bellamy said.

"A now-famous case in Wisconsin involving Karen Thompson's court battle for legal guardianship of her disabled lover Sharon Kowalski has made many of us realize that the system works to keep us apart — it works against us and our love for one another.

"We are frightened to think that we could be continued on page 4

NGLTF Celebrates, Plans Meet

By DEBORAH BURKS
Staff Writer

In November, the country's oldest national gay and lesbian organization will celebrate 15 years of advocacy of gay and lesbian civil rights.

As a part of its celebration, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) will sponsor "Creating Change: A National Conference for Gay and Lesbian Organizing and Leadership Skill Building" which will be held Nov. 18-20 in Washington, D.C.

NGLTF is taking this opportunity to share what they have learned in the past 15 years about organizing, lobbying and educating, its director said. The "Creating Change" conference will feature at least 45 workshops over a three-day period. These workshops will be arranged by themes and conference participants will be able to follow a variety of tracks, including media, lobbying, direct action, AIDS, fund raising, anti-violence, lesbian issues and minority concerns.

"With 'Creating Change', we've tried to offer something for everyone," said Jeff Levi, executive director of NGLTF. "Whether you are a seasoned veteran activist or someone just getting involved, if you are from a newly formed or forming organization or one that is large, established and sophisticated, I think

you'll find something in this conference for you."

Plenary session speakers will include Renee McCoy, executive director of the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, and Virginia Apuzzo, New York Gov. Mario Cuomo's liaison to the gay and lesbian community.

More information on the conference may be obtained from NGLTF's Steve Snell at (202) 332-6483. •

INSIDE

Jaan Sturgis
is gone dishin',
page 5.

Come on in,
The Swimming-Pool
Library's fine,
page 6.

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Dates

October

Mondays

Nashville CARES

AIDS/ARC Support Group. 6:30pm. HIV Education Support Group. 6pm. Family Support Group. 6:30pm. Info phone 385-1510.

Lambda Group

Closed Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for gay men and lesbians, Unitarian Church. 8pm.

MAGNET (Married and Gay Network)

New group for married gay men. 1st & 3rd Mondays only. MCC-Nashville. 8pm. Info phone 320-0288.

Tuesdays

Vanderbilt Lambda Association

Meeting for gay and lesbian Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff and alumni. Divinity School, Room G 23. 5:30pm. Info phone 298-9931.

AI-Anon

Open meeting, MCC-Nashville. 6:30pm.

Nashville CARES

HIV Education Support Groups. 7pm. Info phone 385-1510.

Sober Sisters (Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous)

Closed meeting, MCC-Nashville. 8pm.

Wednesdays

Sex Addicts Anonymous Closed meeting for gay men and lesbians. MCC-Nashville. 5:30pm.

Nashville CARES

AIDS/ARC Couples Support Group. 5:30pm. AIDS/ARC Support Group. 6:30pm. HIV Support Group. 7pm. Info phone 385-1510.

Thursdays

Nashville CARES

HIV Support Group. 6:30pm. Info phone 385-1510.

Alternatives (Alcoholics Anonymous) Closed meeting for lesbians and gay men, MCC-Nashville. 8pm.

Lesbian Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA)

Meeting. 8pm. Info phone 385-4776 or 352-5823.

Fridays

Sexaholics Anonymous Closed meeting, MCC-Nashville. 5pm.

Alcoholics Anonymous Program Study Group Meeting, Belmont United Methodist. 7:30pm.

Saturdays

Nashville CARES

AIDS/ARC Support Group. 4pm.

Metropolitan Community Church-Nashville

Mortgage Meal, all you can eat. 7:30pm. \$5.

Gay Cable Network Cablecast, Viacom Channel 35 (Community Access Television). 8pm. Free.

Sundays

Manna New Life Church

Worship service, 11am. Info phone 833-8581 or 834-4491.

Metropolitan Community Church-Nashville

Worship services, 11am and 7pm. Info phone 320-0288.

SPECIAL Events

Sunday, October 16

Pride Week '89 Committee Planning meeting. 1401 Cedar. 1pm. Info phone 297-4293.

Thursday, October 20

Film Sunday, Bloody Sunday Vanderbilt Lambda Association. 220 Garland Hall, Vanderbilt. 7pm. \$1 donation.

Saturday, October 29

Halloween Party Talent show and raffle, follows Mortgage Meal. MCC-Nashville. 8:30pm. Dinner & party, \$6. Party only, \$3. Info phone 320-0288, 885-8202 or 391-0222.

Monday, October 31

HALLOWEEN

Sunday, November 6

Concert Romanovsky & Phillips, "the gay Smothers Brothers," with Marianne Osiel. First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1808 Woodmont Blvd. Sponsored by Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA). \$7. Info phone Scott Osten, 385-1510 or 269-4283.

Monday, November 7

Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA) Monthly meeting. Towne House Tea Room, 165 8th Ave North. 7pm. Free. Info phone 297-4293.

Sunday, November 13

Feminist Book Circle Meeting. Discussion of *Going Out of Our Minds*, by Sonia Johnson. First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1808 Woodmont Blvd. 5-7pm. Free. Info phone 298-9931.

Your nonprofit event can be listed free in *Dates*. Just drop a postcard or letter to *Dare*, Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204-0422, or phone 292-9623 and leave a message. Please include information about time, location, cost, sponsor, and a contact person's name with address and/or phone number for verification.

AIDS Quilt Returns to Capital

By **STUART BIVIN**
Editor

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The NAMES Project National AIDS Quilt returned to Washington last weekend after a year-long odyssey that took it to 20 cities around the country.

The anniversary display of the Quilt coincided with a flurry of lesbian-gay and AIDS activism in Washington and around the country.

The Capital was the scene of concerts, the premiere of *More Than Names* (a new play based on the story of the NAMES Project), and a special tribute at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to those performing artists lost to the AIDS epidemic.

AIDS activists, not affiliated with the NAMES Project, shut down the Federal Food and Drug Administration Tuesday when they blocked entrances to the FDA's Maryland enormous 17-story headquarters in protest of the agency's lengthy approval procedure for new drugs to fight AIDS.

Author and activist Vito Russo argued that the FDA's reasoning for the years-long delays in approving new drugs is inappropriate.

"They say that they must be sure the drugs have no dangerous side effects before approval," Russo said. "The side effect of AIDS is death."

National Coming Out Day events around the U.S. also celebrated the first anniversary of the March on Washington.

The Quilt was displayed on the Ellipse,

between the White House and the Washington Monument. It was five times larger than when it was first displayed at the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights last October.

More than 8,288 panels, each six feet by three feet, memorialized some of those who have died from AIDS. Each panel is handmade by volunteers.

The NAMES Project, organized by San Francisco activist Cleve Jones, has helped to raise over \$400,000 for direct services to people with AIDS (PWAs) in the last year, and "encouraged support for people with AIDS and their loved ones," according to Dan Sauro, Spokesperson for the NAMES Project.

Although the group's organizers encourage AIDS activism, they maintain that the group is not primarily political.

"The NAMES Project is not a political organization. We take no position on any of the issues surrounding the epidemic," Jones said. "From the beginning our goals have been simply to offer the Quilt as an example of an appropriate, compassionate response. But we are not naïve, and it is our hope that we'll have an impact on the political process, that as we touch people's hearts they will see the desperate need for leadership and direction to bring us out of this dark crisis."

"The magnitude of the Quilt represents the magnitude of the issue that voters will face, just four short weeks from today." •

...AIDS-drug money extended

continued from page 1

Moreover, many states could not spend the allocations given to them last year, or had late starting dates for their programs. Illinois, the last state to begin its program, returned \$183,000, a quarter of its allocation, to the government. Hayes said this was a negative factor in the unsuccessful effort to raise new money for the program.

Six states ran out of money completely, including Florida and Louisiana. States that had a surplus had the option of obligating the funds by Sept. 30 or returning the money for redistribution to other states.

Richard Schulman of the Health Resources and Services Administration said the original intent was to ask Burroughs to contribute \$15 million, with matching funds from the government, to continue the program for another year.

This idea met with resistance from legislators who saw it as creating an entitlement program for AZT. "They don't want it...because it would set a precedent for every other illness and, frankly, the government is not moving in that direction," Schulman said.

Schulman added that the hope last year was that the states would raise their eligibility for Medicaid. This did not happen.

Indeed, many states began the Drug Reimbursement Program with an eligibility ceiling only slightly higher than Medicaid, or about \$11,000 per year allowable annual income. In response to pressure from critics and activists, most states gradually raised the ceiling.

Two states, Alabama and Colorado, still do not offer AZT under their Medicaid programs.

"We are trying to allow the states an additional six months to get their act together," Schulman said. "I don't think it's going to fly again."

Kathy Bartlett, a Burroughs spokesperson, said the company had decided to contribute to the subsidy after consultations with Federal officials, including Weicker, in trying to find an "appropriate" response.

"We did feel that people who were benefiting from this drug but did not have third-party reimbursement might not have access to it [the drug]," Bartlett said.

Asked if Burroughs would reduce the price of AZT further, as called for in a letter sent recently by members of Congress to Burroughs near the end of September, Bartlett mentioned that the company reduced the price to its current level last December.

"The letter does suggest that, but it also asks us to consider an appropriate response. That letter obviously was in the works at the same time we were in discussions about the \$5 million patient assistance grant. And we do feel that that is an appropriate and timely response to this particular situation."

Bartlett said it was unlikely that Burroughs would renew the grant. "We are considering this to be a one-time grant. The situation that these patients are in is a larger situation than the resources of a single pharmaceutical company...the Federal and state governments are going to have to reexamine the issue. The problem here is that we've got a disparity between third-party payment programs that pay for medication and those that pay for hospitalization. Here we have a therapy that can hopefully reduce hospitalizations and return patients to productive worklives."

Bartlett added that the problem of paying for costly therapies for long term illnesses "is not unique to AIDS treatment."

In addition to AZT, Burroughs makes Septra, a drug used to treat pneumocystis carinii pneumonia [PCP] and a herpes treatment drug, Zovirax. •

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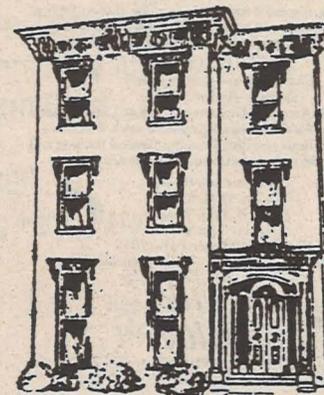
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...National Coming Out Day

continued from page 1

as committed to our lifemates as married heterosexual couples, but have them taken from us with no legal recourse if they were to become seriously ill or injured. Straight men and women would be outraged by such a suggestion. So are we," Bellamy added.

The group also protested the use of their tax dollars for the perpetuation of an institution that explicitly excludes them.

"It is outrageous. But it is only one example of the many, many injustices perpetrated against us by the government we support and the society in which we live," Campbell said.

The group also sent a letter to new Attorney General Charles Burson protesting Cody's opinion and asking Burson to issue a new opinion recognizing same-sex relationships. The letter, signed by former Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund Legal Director Abby Rubinfeld, now practicing law in Nashville, Advance co-chair Deborah Burks (Advance is a political action committee associated with T-GALA), and Campbell, urged Burson to reconsider the opinion, which does not have the force of law, but which is used by state officials to interpret the law unless the courts rule otherwise.

National Coming Out Day came on the first anniversary of the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights last October

11. The March, attended by over 300 Tennesseans, was officially recognized as the largest civil rights demonstration in U.S. history late this summer when the U.S. Park Service revised its estimate of the crowd from 200,000 to 750,000.

The NCOD celebration was intended by organizers to raise the visibility increase the political power of lesbian and gay Americans by showing the large numbers of homosexuals in the country.

Organizers asked lesbians and gay men across the U.S. to "take their next step" in the coming-out process, Campbell said.

"Coming out isn't something a gay man or lesbian does once. It is a process that continues on a daily basis.

"Today, some people finally told their best friend, parent, sister or brother that they were gay. Others told their boss or a friend at work. Some celebrated their sexuality by marching in the streets. Still others joined protests for the first time.

"It was a significant event for each person, but only the next step. There will be many more steps for all of us before our society, our state, our nation, our world recognized that we are here and we are its children, too."

The day's activities were capped off locally by a celebration at the Gas Lite Lounge, benefiting the local NCOD effort. •

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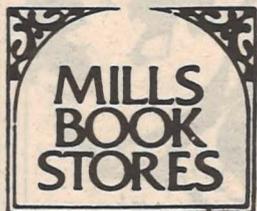
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AIDS Update

The Politics of AIDS

By LEONARD LINDSAY

Special to Dare

While many of us are involved in educating the community about preventing the spread of HIV and/or volunteering our time to provide services to persons living with ARC or AIDS, we must not forget that there is another arena which requires our attention - the political arena.

For it is our political arenas - city councils, state legislatures, and the Congress - where decisions are being made that impact everyone concerned with AIDS. The critical issue that is at the heart of these political debates is funding - adequate funding for AIDS education, services, and research. Without adequate funding, we are helpless in the face of the epidemic. With adequate funding, we are more likely to accomplish our goal of minimizing the impact of AIDS on society. Politics, therefore, must be a concern. If we do not become politically involved, then someone else, someone less informed and less sensitive to our concerns, will be making the decisions.

Politics has been defined as the "authoritative allocation of scarce resources." Many of us who are involved in the politics of AIDS realize that we must be political in order to obtain our share of the scarce resources - money, time and energy - to accomplish our goals. In the community, politics can be used to influence or convince our elected and appointed officials that scarce resources (particularly adequate funding) must be allocated for AIDS research; to prevent the spread of HIV; and to provide services for persons living with ARC or AIDS.

In Tennessee, as in many other states, our elected officials are not allocating adequate funds for these activities. Therefore, we have a

mandate to participate politically to obtain adequate funding.

Participation is not difficult. It does, however, require our scarce resources - time, money and energy. Following are some ways in which we can become involved as individuals and influence our policymakers.

1. Vote. Most importantly, vote on November 4! Rationalizing why you will not vote this election is a mistake.

2. Support professional associations and community organizations who share your opinions. Many of us belong to groups which have a significant influence over our elected officials.

What is your association's position on AIDS? If you agree with it, support and disseminate your association's statements. If you disagree with the position, work to change it. A group of individuals who share common beliefs may have much more influence than a single individual.

3. Monitor your elected officials' performance and let them know you are concerned. Our policymakers are public servants. Their job is to represent the views of their constituents. Contact them. Invite them to lunch. Let them know that you care.

Finally, we must be careful in how we approach these issues. We need to make sure our facts are correct and our views fair. In addition, elected officials, like the rest of us, do not respond well to threats. They respond to sincerity and concern. They want to do the right thing. It is up to us to educate our policymakers and convey our concerns to them.

Leonard Lindsay, MPH, MSN, is the Associate Director of the Vanderbilt AIDS Project and an assistant professor at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing. •

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Sociables

On the Road, On the Make and On the Spot

By **JAAN STURGIS**
Staff Writer

Travel, travel, travel. That seems to be the byword for Nashvillians lately, because I swear that no one I know (save myself) has remained in town the last few weeks.

Dan Ramey, notorious chief social worker at Nashville CARES, along with the chatty James Gidcomb, has recently been to every gay man's dream city: San Francisco. From the Golden Gate Bridge to the Castro district and beyond these two hearty souls did the town (oh my).

Mr. Ramey went under the auspices of taking in the Second Annual AIDS Conference sponsored by the San Francisco Health Department, but James Gidcomb had other things in store. His comment on San Francisco was, "There's no difference between the day and the night!"

Now, dearhearts, put *that* in your pipe and chaw on it for a while.

Who just got back from the Northeast – Boston, that is? Why, Frank Ashe, of course. Was he thrilled about his visit? Ecstatic doesn't sum up his fervor for the city of the great tea dance, er, party.

Why did he go? To attend a friend's wedding. Not only did he dance the night away at the wedding reception last Saturday, but about 1:00 a.m. Sunday morning a huge birthday cake with, um, 29(+) candles on it was wheeled into the dance hall and all joined in a boisterous (perhaps a bit drunken) round of "Happy Birthday."

What was one of the highlights of his trip? Well, Frank says that the trip to Hubba Hubba – a clothing store – was a REAL trip.

Unfortunately, in the passion of packing, he'd forgotten his black shoes and his friends insisted that Hubba Hubba would have just the thing. Well, they did. Kinda. They had women's shoes in sizes up to 15 and 16 and beyond and the young man who was trying them on the punk-looking clerk were so blasé that one would have thought it was an everyday occurrence there – purchasing bright fuchsia pumps in a 14-C!

To be kind to his Nashville friends, Frank brought us wonderful remembrances. Knowing my extreme disdain for architecture and preservation, he purchased a T-shirt with a pic of the Paul Revere house on it. Turns out that this property was considered the beginning of the preservation movement back in the 1890s. And for everyone's friend Tammy Willard, Frank bought a sweatshirt with a multi-colored streetscape of a typical Boston neighborhood. Both really neat gifts.

Where was the wedding? At the Winery, an exclusive restaurant which overlooks Boston Harbor.

Knowing that her in-laws were adamant teetotalers, the bride had the restaurant match a yellow apple juice with a yummy golden champagne. She gave strict instructions on which people were to get which drink. Worked out lovely and no one knew the better of this scheme. Clever, don't you think.

Perhaps the highlight of the week for Frank was last Thursday evening when he went to the *Gay Community News* to help assemble the paper for Friday's publication.

Welcomed by the staff and other volunteers, Frank was told that they were particularly shorthanded because so many of their folks

had gone to Washington, D.C. Washington, you say...

Yes, dearhearts, *Dare* darlings Stuart Bivin and Jeff Ellis were in Washington along with those Bostonians and others from across the U.S. to attend the display of the NAMES Project National AIDS Quilt and for a Gay and Lesbian Press Association meeting. And to see Archie Bunker's chair at the Smithsonian. Ah, kulchur.

Who cares about the meeting, but be sure to ask Stuart what they did on Saturday night. It made me blush – the second time this year! It was more than I could believe of that fearless duo.

I did hear that they stayed at the new home of former Nashvillian Faye Hale, editor of publications for the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers union. Faye says to remind everyone not to drink Coke products because it isn't politically correct – Coke still has ties to South Africa.

Also at the unfolding of the quilt were CARES' Julie Jones, Gee! Scott Osten, and Mike Garwood, along with mega star Susan Sarandon and Memphis' Rick Bray. Ronald Reagan and Jerry Falwell were not there.

And what have Diane Easter, Gerry Scopetuolo, Diane Neel, Penny Campbell, Barbara Savage, Devie Levin, Krys Krakoviak, Dan Ramey, Merle Franklin, Laura Tek, Sheffield Clark, Linda Johnson, Linda Goss, Gary Bellamy, Jim Aldredge, Paul Tucker, *Dare's* own Deborah Burks, Ann Taylor and Carole Cunningham been up to lately? You got it. This past Tuesday they all demanded that the City Clerk's office at Howard School give them marriage licenses. Quite a statement, my dears. You're all to be commended for your bravery and commitment.

And I hear that the fireworks display which occurred for those of us who were in town last weekend was a huge success.

Such a success that Diane Easter claims she could see them from her apartment on 21st near Vandy. Hmmm...what could that all mean?

Laura Tek is tickled lavender – by the Lavender Law conference, that is.

A law student, she's going to the conference on lesbian and gay legal issues in San Francisco the first week of November. Says that there will be more legal-type lesbian and gay folks at that one gathering than ever before – including our own, attorneys Abby Rubinfeld and Stuart Bivin. Sounds like this meeting will be happy hunting grounds. Mother always wanted me to marry a lawyer.

At last Saturday's Oktoberfest, I ran into more people than I could shake a stick at, not that I go around shaking sticks at people. The country kitsch crafts were everywhere and at least a fair number of the crowd, including Alan Jewell, whom I went with, was decrying their true delights.

Unfortunately, I missed the homes tour (a first for me), but I did stop to chat briefly with Rick Murphy and George Zepp. Too, Miles Fields and his other quarter John gave me a nod of the hat. I'm sure there must have been others that I should have recognized...

Well, dearhearts, another *Sociables* has come to a close. What have you been up to? Been to any parties? What costume are you wearing for Halloween? Why not call me any evening at 226-4034. I'd just love to hear. •

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14
CONDUCTORS CLUB NIGHT
Cake Walk & Other OktoberFest games
Free Sauerkraut and Hot Dogs
10:30 until 1:30

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15
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The
COWBOY II

Dare

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From the Heart of the American South

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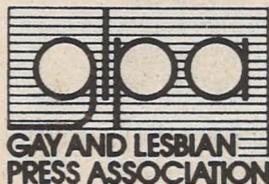
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Views

Courage. And Something Else.

LAST TUESDAY was National Coming Out Day (NCOD), the first-anniversary celebration of the success of the historic March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. The March was the largest civil rights demonstration in the history of the United States.

National organizers of NCOD urged gay men and lesbians across the country to take their next step in the coming-out process.

Here in Nashville, lesbians and gay men celebrated individually and *en masse*.

At noon, ten same-sex couples marched into the Metro Nashville/Davidson County marriage bureau and asked the clerk to issue them marriage licenses.

At the same event, local activists announced that Metro Mayor Bill Boner had promised to issue a proclamation in honor of National Coming Out Day.

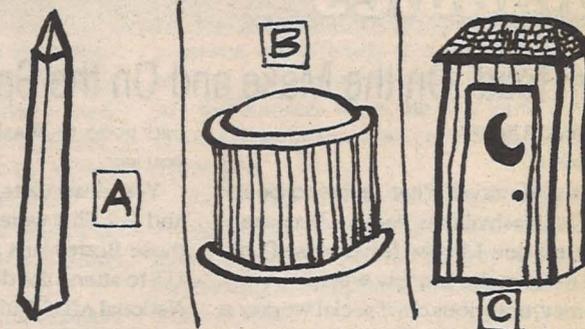
Later in the afternoon, about 30 people gathered on campus at Vanderbilt University to mark the official coming-out of Vanderbilt Lambda at the group's first widely-publicized open meeting, and to see the official video of the March, which drew 750,000 men, women and children to Washington, D.C., last October.

Still later in the evening, a large crowd of men and women celebrated the day at the Gas Lite Lounge downtown.

Those who took part in the day's events showed courage.

It took courage to face the reporters, photographers and TV cameras at the marriage bureau, to face the clerks and take a stand on the legal

Quiz #1: Match the monuments with their correct names.



Washington Monument Jefferson Memorial
 Reagan AIDS Compassion Monument

system's discrimination against same-sex couples.

It took courage for students, faculty, staff and alumni at Vanderbilt to attend a public Lambda meeting, not knowing who might show up and see them there.

It took courage for community leaders to press the Mayor's office for a proclamation decrying bigotry and violence against lesbians and gay men.

It took courage for all those who took their next steps.

But everyone who took a next step came away empowered, even those who had taken only little steps.

And we all know what the longest journey begins with. •

Pages

Dip into *Swimming-Pool*

The *Swimming-Pool Library*. By Alan Hollinghurst.
New York: Random House, 1988.

By JOE MAROHL
Staff Writer

In his first novel, Alan Hollinghurst offers a split-screen picture of gay history in the twentieth century. He accomplishes this double vision through juxtaposition of events in the London life of young English aristocrat Will Beckwith and entries in the mostly overseas diary of an elderly English aristocrat, Charles Nantwich, who's approached the younger man to write his biography.

The novel contrasts two worlds. First, the far-flung British Empire of the first half of the century and the covert lives of homosexual men then who, with little or no understanding of their sexual identities, dared to love and suffer persecution for loving.

Second, the leftovers of the Empire, London as a melting pot of blacks, West Indians and other ex-colonials, and the comparably open lives of modern gay men who, with little or no memory of the past or their gay heritage, still dare to love and sheepishly suffer (still!) persecution for loving.

The two protagonists, who are roughly sixty years apart in age, are first brought together by accident. As they become better acquainted they become aware of common elements in their personalities.

Both are aristocrats with social connections and education appropriate to their class.

Both are attracted to men who belong to a lower social order, specifically black men of the labor class.

As the novel progresses, their lives are revealed to be connected more and more until Beckwith's climactic discovery of just how inextricably (and ironically) the two men's fates are knit together.

The message of *The Swimming-Pool Library* is that we learn from history. Or, rather, that we ought to learn from history. Or, rather, that we had better start learning from history. The



novel demonstrates the necessity of gay history as an alternative to the history codified and preserved in the mainstream. The novel also teaches us, from the standpoint of the era of AIDS, how we adapt to survive and how change occurs through active conflict of opposing forces.

All social and political pretensions aside, Hollinghurst's is a uniquely cinematic gay novel, just begging for a 12-part adaptation on *Masterpiece Theater* or something. One would be hard-pressed to say, however, who would best direct a film adaptation of this book: James Ivory (*Maurice*), say, or Stephen Frears (*Prick Up Your Ears*)? The book achieves two distinct tones in representing past and near-present.

The more contemporary London scenes are highly charged with the sort of blunt eroticism and violent energy one usually associates with contemporary gay writers like Andrew Holleran or even John Rechy. Plenty of "dirty realism" about hustlers, urinals, bath houses, addictive sex, s & m, etc.

On the other hand, the story within the story, the memoirs of the elder Nantwich, who is the same age as the century, is an impressive parody of the comparably chaste writings of Denton Welch and E.M. Forster, who wrote

about comrade-love in an only elusively erotic way. In a recent *Voice Literary Supplement* review of the novel, Vince Aletti savvily compares it to "cruising with Joe Orton and Ronald Firbank."

The doubleness of vision is handled well by the author. The book's epigraph, a quote from Firbank's *The Flower Beneath the Foot*, is followed through in the book so that Firbank becomes a major unifying element in the plot. The epigraph, in which an ingenue gushily explains that she learned to read quickly on "the screens at Cinemas," looks two ways historically at once, the cinematic present and the literary past. Firbank as a real figure in history is used in several ways. We are told that Nantwich briefly met Firbank shortly before the eccentric author died in the 1920s (suggestively, when Nantwich was the same age as Beckwith when they met), and James, the young protagonist's physically repulsive physician friend, is a Firbank devotee and collector.

Without my giving away too much of the story, the novel ends with a pornographer's accidental discovery of some antique movie footage of Firbank's being cruelly mocked by Italian children in the streets of Genzano. Hollinghurst knits his twin plots together with irony and the kind of narrative symmetry that suggests fate.

The book portrays homophobia against a wider context of racism, ageism and sexism, flaws apparent in Western culture in general and no less in the novel's smug gay protagonist Beckwith. *The Swimming-Pool Library* is a cry against the superficiality and obscurantism that dominate gay culture today, an eloquent protest against the gay cult of the beautiful and its wholesale rejection of political activism, intellectuality and the spirit.

But what is most endearing about the book is its erotic portrait of gay friendship, a balance never before so intelligently and elegantly achieved. •

