Protestors Interrupt AIDS Commission Testimony

President's AIDS Commission heard testimony of homophobic Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-Calif.) before the President's AIDS Commission here Thursday.

The group marched into the hearings holding hands and chanting, "We are not going to tolerate your stupidity."

The six were part of a larger group of some 20 protesting Dannemeyer's testimony. The group picketed outside the Stadium Club at Vanderbilt University, where the Commission's hearings were held at the invitation of Colleen Conway Welch, dean of the Nursing School and a member of the panel.

The protest, organized by a coalition of local AIDS and gay rights groups, sought to divert attention from Dannemeyer's support for mandatory HIV testing and the reporting of seropositivity. Dannemeyer's attacks on privacy rights and gay rights also drew criticism from the protesters.

Following the hearing's interruption by the six protesters, the meeting was immediately recessed. Security officers were asked to escort the six from the room. The group then left without incident.

Gerry Scoppetuolo, a founding member of LASEN (Legislation for AIDS Services, Education and Resources), and a participant in the action, said the protest was only the beginning of "militant organizing to bring local attention to the criminal lack of action by the state of Tennessee on AIDS issues."

Scoppetuolo added that a chapter of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) is forming in Nashville. The group will organize more visible actions to prod the state into both increased funding for AIDS services and education, and the restoration of protection for AIDS sufferers under the state's handicapped job discrimination law.

Sunday's Tennessean reported that Gov. Ned McWherter is supportive of changes in that law to ensure that persons with AIDS do not become victims of discrimination. Scoppetuolo reiterated that claim.

However, according to Scoppetuolo, the state has done nothing to help in the fight against AIDS.

"The emperor has no clothes," he said. "We think it's time for someone to say he's naked."

AIDS Commission Meets in Nashville

From Staff Reports

Hatred and discrimination against people with AIDS was the recurring theme last week as members of the President's AIDS Commission heard testimony in meetings on the Vanderbilt campus.

Norma Mowery, of Lake City, recounted her family's turmoils which began last fall when her son's condition was disclosed by school officials there. Twelve-year-old Dewayne Mowery, a hemophiliac, was infected with the virus through contaminated blood products.

"We worry all the time about Dewayne," she said. "He does not like school anymore. He has no chance to make friends. One of the reasons you go to school is to make friends."

Her son now attends the Anderson County Gifted Center four days a week, alone in a classroom designed for thirty or more children. Dewayne, who has a learning disability, had been attending a school for the handicapped, which has since closed.

"In order to get an education for my child, I had to give information to the school," Mowery testified, her son looking on. "But giving out that information destroyed our privacy."

She called to task those Anderson County school officials who discussed her son's condition with reporters without her permission, and told of people driving by the Mowery home with signs saying, "Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!"

Mowery's testimony came during the first day of the hearings which also included Ben Schatz of National Gay Rights Advocates, based in San Francisco, and Abby Rubenfeld, legal director of Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund in New York City. In addition, an AIDS patient who lost his health insurance, and a woman whose brother was virtually neglected by hospital personnel during his last days, also offered testimony.

"We had to bathe him, change his bed linens and feed him," she told the panel. "They (the hospital personnel) wouldn't even come near him."

Thursday's testimony was the target of protests by a group of local gay and lesbian activists who were objecting to the appearance of conservative California congressman William Dannemeyer.

Rep. Dannemeyer asked the commission to recommend to President Reagan that anyone who is infected with the AIDS virus be reported to public health officials. Fears, Dannemeyer suggested that anyone with the virus or who is openly gay should be exempt from any federal anti-discrimination protection.

In other testimony Thursday, Dr. Lorraine Day, chief of orthopedic surgery at San Francisco General Hospital, told the commission that all hospital patients should be tested for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Several members of the commission apparently supported Day's recommendation. Day said that in her career she has portable operated on as many AIDS patients as anyone in the country. She has been at the San Francisco hospital for 15 years. Because orthopedic surgery requires hours of drilling and sawing on bones, persons in the operating room are many times covered in blood. Thus, Day said, it is important they be aware if they are indeed dealing with someone with the HIV virus.
March

23
Wednesday
Vanderbilt Women's Faculty Organization Sexual Harassment: Discrimination in Dietetics, 118 E. Monroe.
Nashville CARES Bachelor's Bid Auction and Raffle, Warehouse 28.

25
Friday
Vanderbilt Lambda Association Karen Thompson Lecture, 114 Furman Hall, 7 pm.
Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA) Karen Thompson Reception, 114 Furman Hall, 8 pm.
Nashville CARES Benefit Show, Junior's

27
Sunday
Nashville CARES Writer's Night, Bluebird Cafe.

April

1
Friday
Nashville CARES Gay & Lesbian Revue and Buffet, Warehouse 28, 11 pm.

2
Saturday
Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Task Force Meeting, Memphis, 1 pm.
U.S. Rep. Bob Clement (D-Tenn.) Open Meetings: Bledsoe Center, 1417 Charlotte Av., 9 am - 10:30 am. 300 Cafe, Lower Mall Entrance, 11:30 am - 1 pm. Kruger - Bellevue, 7087 Hoy 705, 2 pm - 3:30 pm.

14 - 17
Thursday - Sunday
Southeastern Conference for Lesbians and Gay Men Conference, Pinnvood Plaza Convention Center, Atlanta.

Directory

RESTAURANTS AND CLUBS
The Cabaret
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The Chute
Crazy Cowboy II
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Juanita's
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World's End

ORGANIZATIONS
American Civil Liberties Union
Hedy Weinberg, Director
Box 120160, Nashville, 37212
256-7028

Conductors
Nashville CARES Sandee Potter, Director
Box 25107, Nashville, 37202
388-1510

Nashville Women's Alliance
Box 120834, Nashville, 37212

National Organization for Women (Tennessee) Elizabeth Jamieson, President
Box 120523, Nashville, 37212

Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA)
Box 24181, Nashville, 37202

Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Task Force (TGLTF) Carole Cunningham, President
Box 24181, Nashville, 37202

Vanderbilt Lambda Association
Box 121743, Nashville, 37212

Women's Resource Center (WCA)
1608 Woodmont Blvd
388-3562

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Innke K. Ratner, Licensed Counselor
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Rev. Paul Tucker, Pastor
131 15th Av North
320-0288

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Metro health director Dr. Fredia Wadley presented a proposal at the Friday hearing which would require that all Tennesseans suffering from AIDS would be reported to state officials.

Wadley said that those infected would still be reported, but not by name or address, under the proposal. Also testifying was state Environmental Commissioner James Word.

"The commissioner and I believe," Wadley said, "that even with improved confidentiality laws, the possibility of breaching that confidentiality is present."

However, despite her fears, Wadley still supports mandatory reporting after reasonable efforts to protect the person's confidentiality are made.

State officials argue that mandatory reporting is necessary to help them to more accurately determine the number of Tennesseans suffering from AIDS. Presently, health officials can only estimate that number.

Since 1982, approximately 390 Tennesseans have been diagnosed as having the disease and more than 12,000 others are believed to be infected with the virus.

**Controversial Film Premieres Thursday**

The Nashville premiere of *Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done*, the controversial documentary exploring the marriage of Christian fundamentalism to the political right, will be Thursday night at Vanderbilt's Sarratt Cinema at 7:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the Vanderbilt Religious Ministries Group, the University Chaplain and the Sarratt Film Committee, the film will be followed by a question and answer session.

Written, produced and directed by Anthony Thomas, *Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done* is a co-production of England's Central Television Network and PBS. "Frontline" the documentary series, was pulled from the schedule when PBS claimed it was "unsuitable" for airing.

The original air date came two months after the resignation of Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker from the PTL ministries, which provides much of the focus for part one of the film.

W.A. Critwell said, "There are also references to well-known televangelists Jimmy Swaggart and Jerry Falwell."

Admission to the film is $2.50.

**Activist Dems Clear First Hurdle**

Several gay and lesbian activists Saturday cleared the first hurdle in becoming delegates to the Democratic National Convention.

Deborah Burks, a candidate for a Jesse Jackson delegate spot, and Jeff Ellis, running for a spot on Tennessee Senator Al Gore's slate of delegates, both won seats in caucuses held Saturday during the Davidson County Democratic Party convention. Both Burks and Ellis will now go on to this Saturday's district convention to be held at the Legislative Plaza.

"It was a good experience, politically," Burks said. "I feel like I learned a lot about the system."

Burks further noted the support from other gay and lesbian activists at the Jackson caucus. Seven others were selected to attend the fifth district convention as Jackson voters.

"I think we were able to show some political muscle," Ellis said. "And were able to do some important coalition-building at the convention that may pay off for us in the future."

During the Super Tuesday primary, Gore won five delegate seats in the fifth congressional district, with Jackson pocketing one of the delegate positions. National party rules mandate that all Tennesseans suffering from AIDS would be reported to state officials.

"There is increasing pressure to take away our responsibility at a time when we most expect individuals to be responsible for their behavior."

The AIDS crisis demands social cohesion and cooperation rather than isolation and divisiveness, Hutton said.

Previously Wadley, Metro Medical Director, called "good news the fact that AIDS still seems to be primarily affecting gay men and intravenous drug users.

Wadley said her department has asked the legislature to include $300,000 in the state budget for AIDS education, counseling. Wadley said that the state would need to allocate six or seven times the figure that has requested in order to effectively fight the AIDS virus in Tennessee. More than 200 Tennesseans have died from AIDS since 1982.

**Fear, not AIDS, is in the Air**

By CAROLYN CONULMANN

"Fear, not AIDS, is in the air," according to Francisco Sy, associate professor of epidemiology and director of the Carolina AIDS Research and Education Project at the University of South Carolina.

So's comments were made at a forum held as part of the Vanderbilt AIDS Project's AIDS Education Week in early February. The week's events attracted international experts on AIDS, local health officials and audiences in the hundreds.

Sy, president of the International Society for AIDS Education, called for increased public education about the spread of HIV, reporting that there are now more than 75,000 cases of AIDS in 130 countries worldwide.

While condoms are only partially effective in curbing the spread of AIDS, Sy explained that they are still the best method available. Sy called for increased voluntary testing in order to document for research purposes the spread of the disease, and for laws prohibiting discrimination against people with AIDS and those who test HIV-positive.

In the forum, "AIDS: A Problem Requires Requiring Everyone's Response," A. Gene Copello, director of the Vanderbilt AIDS Project and an assistant professor of medical ethics, discussed the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) to all areas of the world. Held February 4, the forum drew the week's largest crowd.

Worldwide spread of the AIDS virus is "forcing all of us to work together," according to Copello.

Jean Hutton, director of the Center for Social Exploration, Grubbs Institute, London, urged societies worldwide to explore innovative ways to combat the spread of AIDS at the community level.

Hutton described the complex issues faced when trying to use old methods to address new challenges: "There is a danger in using pre-AIDS thinking and tools to do a job that demands a shift in "Cartesian" thinking. The AIDS Epidemic cannot be treated in a "me vs. not me" fashion, according to the world's leading AIDS consultant.

"AIDS should not and cannot be viewed as a disease of the individual," Hutton said.

"Because everyone in the world lives in a world with AIDS, "education must begin inside of each of us." Hutton criticized both efforts to stigmatize those infected with the AIDS virus and attempts to reduce individual rights in the name of society's interests. She said that intolerance and fear have created environments worldwide in which there is increasing pressure to take away our responsibility at a time when we most expect individuals to be responsible for their behavior."

The AIDS crisis demands social cohesion and cooperation rather than isolation and divisiveness, Hutton said.

"We need to exclude our religious and political systems from the AIDS epidemic," Hutton said.

She pointed to the United States' "confirmation bias," which "pulls us into belief systems which will support our fears and mistrusts." In the forum, "AIDS: A Problem Requires Requiring Everyone's Response," A. Gene Copello, director of the Vanderbilt AIDS Project and an assistant professor of medical ethics, discussed the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) to all areas of the world. Held February 4, the forum drew the week's largest crowd.

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She pointed to the United States' "confirmation bias," which "pulls us into belief systems which will support our fears and mistrusts."
"One thing about Cary Churchill, you are never bored." Hardly anyone will disagree with John Russell Taylor's response to Churchill's play Top Girls. What they do disagree about is the significance and meaning of the play, more specifically, how the fantasy of the first scene relates to the naturalistic events of the remainder of the play.

Churchill, a radical socialist-feminist, is often referred to as Britain's leading woman dramatist. Critics and theatre-goers alike have praised the theatricality of her eventful life story and each reveals herself to be a woman of complex achievements, successes and regrets. The women playing the ghost characters and the waitress appear in later scenes as Marlene, her daughter, co-workers and clients.

Following the dinner party, we see Marlene at work, the other women in her office charting to each other and interviewing clients, and the intervention into Marlene's professional life of her slow-witted daughter Angie, who has been brought up by Marlene's sister Joyce. The story, but not the play, ends here, with Angie arriving out of the blue and Marlene predictably, "She's not going to make it."

The final scene in the play is an intense, emotional scene between Marlene and her sister Joyce, who has remained at the family home and lived in poverty while rearing Angie, occurs one year before the dinner party.

Marlene sees herself as an "original", an independent, self-made woman in the image of Margaret Thatcher. She rejects her working-class parentage, recoils at the mention of blood and gynecology, and blindly accepts that her womanhood (in the form of her child and family) is an acceptable sacrifice to make for success.

The dinner party scene is most easily interpreted as a communication of the play's message as a search for the truth of history. We immediately see the parallels between the lives of the women from history, into whose number Marlene is being induced. In some way each has attained success, but only by making concessions to patriarchal systems.

We may agree with Marlene, as does director Dorothy Marie Robinson, that these concessions are necessary because "we've forced to function in a set economic way. What we essentially realize is that feminism - Marlene's brand of bourgeois feminism - is not enough.

Churchill uses the familiar myth of the career woman as caretaker of family, four women from history, into whose number, Marlene is being induced. In the end, the dramatic conflict in Top Girls arises not out of a battle of the sexes but out of class struggle as it persists through many generations. Because we see that Marlene rejects the things about herself that are most closely identified with being a woman, we are tempted to believe that she has become the oppressor by forsaking her sisters in her struggle to achieve. But Churchill does not allow us to forget that Marlene is a woman. Marlene has indeed become the oppressor, but she has forsaken her sisters as well.

Melissa Bedinger, Marlene in the Actors' Playhouse production, agrees, saying that "the sex issue is not the main point. Marlene deniers her class to succeed. The present social structures make it impossible for her to take an individual stance." The dinner party scene, then, is essential. As Valerie Plommer, who plays Joyce and the Waitress, said, "If you pay attention to the first scene you understand the rest of the play - they explain each other."

Marlene and the Waitress are undeniably women. As director Robinson points out, "All of the women in the first scene are part of Marlene." Yet these women are more identified with the ideologies of their cultures than they are with women as a group. Each has a separate story, an identifying costume, a way of speaking appropriate to her class. Each is able to see the intolerance of the others' cultures, yet blind to the inequities of her own. Even the overlapping dialogue serves to illustrate the lack of group identification. The apparently feminine orientation of the gathering is destroyed as we see that in their own ways each of the women succeeded by supporting the oppression under which they lived.

In the final scene Joyce says, "Nothing comes naturally to her."

"Looking at the "progression" of history through the lives of the dinner party women, we see it hasn't."

"The Gas Lite"

4:30 pm - 1 am Monday - Thursday
4:30 pm - 3 am Friday, Saturday
 Noon - 3 am Sunday

167 1/2 8th Avenue North • 254-1278
Thompson at Women's Week Friday

Why Can't Sharon Come Home?

Karen Thompson will be the featured speaker Friday as part of Vanderbilt University's Women's Week '88.

The 7:00 p.m. lecture will take place in room 114 of Furman Hall on the Vanderbilt campus and is sponsored by Vanderbilt Lambda Association.

Thompson, an assistant professor at St. Cloud (Minn.) State University, lived with Sharon Kowalski in a committed, loving relationship for four years. However, in 1983, when Kowalski was severely disabled as the result of an automobile accident involving a drunk driver, their lives were seriously altered.

Thompson was forced to admit the nature of their relationship to Kowalski's unknowing parents who then took legal steps to prevent Thompson from playing any active role in their daughter's treatment. Thompson entered into a protracted legal battle with the Kowalskis to protect her lover's right to recovery and to ensure their rights as a couple. In 1985, Kowalski's father was appointed her legal guardian.

Since then Thompson has been refused visitation rights and has been excluded from all discussions about Kowalski's care. Her presentation will focus on the guardianship case as an example of homophobia, sexism and handicap-ism which exist in the legal system today.

Contributions to the Karen Thompson legal fund will be accepted. Following Thompson's presentation, the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance will host a reception in her honor.

Karen Thompson

Sex Sting Nabs Forty

More than thirty men were arrested earlier this month as the Davidson County grand jury handed down indictments in a sex-for-pay sting operation conducted by Metro sex abuse and vice detectives.

The indictments were the result of a two-month long undercover operation. The December and January sting took place after police learned that 13-to-18-year-old males in the east Nashville area were selling sex to adult males.

Vanderbilt Support Group

Vanderbilt Lambda Association is a social and support group for gay men, lesbians and bisexuals. The group is open to all Vanderbilt students, staff and faculty, as well as alumni of Vanderbilt and of Peabody College.

Support For Alums, Too

Alumni members of Vanderbilt Lambda Association are forming a lesbian/gay alumni group. All alumni of Vanderbilt and of Peabody College are welcome. For information, write Lambda Alumni Organization, P.O. Box 121743, Nashville, TN 37212.

Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Task Force

Representatives from east, middle and west Tennessee attended the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Task Force (TGLTF) steering committee meeting Saturday, February 6, at the Open 11 am - 3 am Beer Bust Wednesday 7 pm - 11 am Saturday 2 pm - 6 pm Sunday 5 pm - 8 pm 1700 4th Avenue South 256-9681
What's Going on Here?

As we go to press, there's a little more than a week left in Nashville. CARES month, also known as March. The good folks at CARES have been bunting their tails to raise awareness and cash in ever-widening circles since the group's inception a couple of years ago.

CARES is a volunteer-based organization that has traditionally relied on donations to pay its rent and expenses. And most of the money and volunteers come from the news you need and the features world are working to find a cure for.

Sharon Kowalski, the name behind the story, has been severely injured as the result of an automobile accident involving a drunk driver.

Woah, do we get to make you some promises. And to back them up.

Karen has been speaking to groups across the country, pointing out the injustice that Sharon faces. The people who are CARES have been fighting to actually get to accomplish what they have. They've had to fight bigotry, ignorance, and poverty to get the message that someone cares about people with AIDS and even people without AIDS. Let's not make them fight spathy, too.

Volunteer for CARES. It's the least you can do. And the most.

Karen has been speaking to groups across the country, pointing out the injustice that Sharon faces. Many of us heard her at the March on Washington.

In conjunction with Women's Week '88, Karen will speak at Vanderbilt on March 25 at 7 p.m. in Furman 114. Vanderbilt Lambda Association is sponsoring her appearance. Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance will host the reception which will follow her speech. Your attendance is strongly encouraged at this event.

As Karen points out, "any of us can, in a split second, become a Sharon Kowalski."

Deborah Burks
Nashville

We must revel in our diversity. When we accept ourselves and of our acceptance of ourselves and of our diversity.

When we accept ourselves and others, we deserve it. But by refusing it, we can demand that society in general accept us. If we do accept the role left to us by previous generations, then we deserve it. But by refusing it, we may proudly claim our place.

And the only way to do it is to be honest. Come out!

Jan Eilts is a writer, editor and the News Editor of Dare. He came out in 1979 while Editor-in-Chief of Middle Tennessee State University's student newspaper, Smokey.

Endnotes:

- We must come out.
- Our readers are not the best of times.
- Our readers are not the worst of times.

Dare

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During the challenging months following the accident, Karen revealed the natures of their relationship to Sharon's parents. Sharon's parents reacted with hostility and denial.

To protect Sharon's right to privacy, to ensure their rights as a couple, Karen entered into a highly-contentious legal battle with Sharon's parents for guardianship. Sharon's father was appointed her guardian in 1985. Since then, Sharon has been moved to a nursing home and Karen has been denied visitation and involvement in Sharon's rehabilitation.

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Memory Board

By Carole Comrie


Even those nice "lady novels" in which Lillian Hellman tells us the man puts down his fork, and the woman knows its over" succeed in the modest aim of, not telling what characters think and why they act as they do. Most creative writing 101 classes would do the same thing. So writes, Jane Rule included (more of a "lady writer than I care for), seem to have forgotten this fundamental lesson. Cited in clever dialogue and catchy character descriptions (Memory Board, Mary is called "Mount St. Mary). When she's not erupting, she greatly improves the view."

Many popular writers like Rule and their readership seem to confuse the art of the novel with the art of the screenplay, or even, to the "art" loosely, that of the television sitcom. As a writer, Rule asks her readers to be willing observers of what she tells us is the humanity, the egalitarianism, of her characters. Character development becomes secondary to characterization flaws are revealed not in what characters do or have done, but in what they say: "I've made some big mistakes." What those mistakes are or were and how they have shaped the characters are conspicuously absent. To Rule, characters' admissions that they are not Ward Cleavers or Pollyannas is enough, enough to make them humanity-plant characters, their perspective reliable.

Rule's most recent novel, Memory Board, offers no exception to her perennial penchant for well-defined characters, in either "militant partisanship or public penitence. Unfortunately, in the process, Rule seems to create neither believable fiction nor adequate politics.

Memory Board is a novel about people who, for the sake of its form, are indistinguishable from the straight world. The characters are the work of a clever, but shallow writer who doesn't seem to have any real interest in the human condition, or in any real interest in characters. The novel is a failure, a failure of the characters, of the story, of the world in which they live. It is a failure of all of those things that make a novel a failure. It is a failure of the writer's ability to create believable characters, believable people, believable stories.

The characters in Memory Board are shallow, one-dimensional, and predictable. They are the products of a writer who doesn't care about the human condition, or about the world in which they live. They are the products of a writer who is more interested in telling a story than in telling what characters think and why they act as they do. They are the products of a writer who is more interested in making them indistinguishable from the straight world than in making them human beings.

The novel is a failure because it fails to provide any real depth, any real complexity, any real interest in the human condition. It is a failure because it fails to provide any real interest in the world in which it is set. It is a failure because it fails to provide any real interest in the characters that it presents.

More disturbing about Rule's unflagging goodwill toward everyone is the fact that she really doesn't understand what it means to be a human being. The characters in Memory Board are a bunch of people who don't really care about anyone else, who don't really care about themselves, who don't really care about anything. They are a bunch of people who are completely self-centered, who are completely selfish, who are completely uncaring.

The novel is a failure because it fails to provide any real interest in the human condition, or in the world in which it is set. It is a failure because it fails to provide any real interest in the characters that it presents. It is a failure because it fails to provide any real depth, any real complexity, any real interest in anything. It is a failure because it fails to provide any real interest in anything.

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HE’S MARILYN