

# Dare

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 16

TENNESSEE'S LESBIAN AND GAY NEWSWEEKLY

APRIL 21-27, 1989



**Cris Williamson, left, and Teresa Trull**, Olivia Records artists, will perform in Nashville Sunday, May 7, in support of their new album, *Country Blessed*. Williamson, whose 1975 album *The Changer and the Changed* is one of the best-selling independent-label record albums in history, has been acclaimed by mainstream musicians and critics, and enjoys a wide lesbian following. — PHOTO BY IRENE YOUNG

## Nashville Pride Week parade route changed, plans made

by **HARRISON HICKS**  
Contributing Writer

Responding to the results of a survey taken after last year's successful Pride Week celebration, Nashville Lesbian and Gay Pride Week Committee organizers are completing plans to increase visibility for the annual Pride Parade Saturday, June 24 by changing its route and length.

This year's parade, instead of starting at Fannie Mae Dees Park and ending at Centennial Park, will start at Centennial Park with a march of 1.2 miles before returning to Centennial Park, according to Penny Campbell, a member of the committee.

"We thought that it might be easier to begin and end in the same place," she said, citing problems last year for the more than 200 parade participants who had to park at one location, march to another, and then find a way to retrieve their cars later.

Campbell said surveys returned to the committee also showed a desire for more visibility for the march, which last year wound through side streets until the crossing of West End Avenue to the main entrance of Centennial Park.

nial Park.

Accordingly, Campbell said that parade organizers this year plan for the march to proceed east on Elliston Place to 21st Avenue, then back over to West End before concluding at Centennial Park, a route three-tenths mile longer than last year's.

The parade will also start later in the day, at 3 p.m., Campbell said, a move designed to place most of the day's activities in the cooler late-afternoon and early evening hours. Last year, marchers had to brave 103-degree heat for the mid-day parade.

While plans for the rally are still being finished, Campbell said that several guest speakers and entertainers are being lined up for the event. Keynote speaker will be Metropolitan Community Church/Detroit minister Renée McCoy, the executive director of the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays. The day's activities are scheduled to be capped off by an evening of entertainment, headlined by a concert by singer Deidre McCalla.

Several other events have been confirmed for Pride Week. The week's activities will •continued on page 5

## Getting personal on paper

by **JEFF ELLIS**  
Managing Editor

"Earth-mother LWF, wondering where all those fabulous women are in the South, seeks intelligent, warm, caring soulmate.

"GWM, late 20s, seeks sun-loving, spirited guy for fun, friendship and more.

"BI-couple seeks adventurous male or female for limitless good times. Must be drug and alcohol-free."

More than once you've probably found yourself scanning the back pages of the *Advocate* or some other nationally-distributed publication, looking for the one advertisement that will catch your fancy.

You may have even turned to *Dare's* back page to read the ads of local interest.

Chances are you tell yourself you're looking simply for amusement. You certainly would never consider answering one.

Or would you?

For many people, however, personal ads may be a viable means of meeting new friends. Or possibly new lovers.

The advertisements, which now appear in publications ranging from the local newspaper to the *New Yorker*, provide an arena for people who want to meet new people to do so. The *Village Voice*, the Greenwich Village-based weekly newspaper, is considered by many to have been the impetus for the current nationwide personals proliferation.

Scanning the personals in any publication will show an abundance of individuals looking for love—or a reasonable facsimile—through a brief descriptive ad. It's easy, it's relatively safe and it's anonymous until the right time comes.

"In a town like this, it seems like everyone has the same circle of friends. And it's very difficult to meet new people," said Randy, a

Nashville man who has placed personal ads before — and answered a few, too.

In fact, Randy answered one such ad in the *Advocate* a couple of months ago. The ad, placed by a man who had just been discharged from the Army, indicated a desire to form a friendship or relationship, and to possibly relocate.

After an exchange of "four or five letters and a couple of phone calls," Randy invited the man to Nashville for a visit.

"In his letters, and in our conversations, he seemed really nice. And I wanted to meet him," Randy said.

From his home on the Mississippi gulf coast, the man traveled by train to Birmingham, where Randy met him. The two drove back to Nashville to spend the weekend.

"I wanted to make things easier for him. He had just gotten out of the Army recently and money was kind of tight, so I volunteered to meet him in Birmingham," he said.

Almost as soon as the two started their trip back to Tennessee, Randy grew uneasy.

"He seemed really stand-offish. He was never affectionate in any way," Randy said.

But Randy assumed his pen pal was just feeling a little bashful. After all, he supposed, how would he have felt meeting a virtual stranger at a train station and driving 200 miles with him?

During the weekend, Randy's houseguest remained aloof, declining invitations to meet other people or to go out.

"He said he was uncomfortable around other people, that he didn't go out much. He said he was quiet and reserved. I could understand that, I don't go out to bars much myself," Randy said. "He was very friendly, but wouldn't allow any physical contact."

• continued on page 3

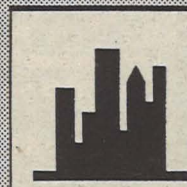
## I N S I D E

this week's Dare

**In Search of Gay America:**  
An exclusive interview with  
author Neil Miller, page 6.

**Talking Back,**  
the new bell hooks book.  
Pages, page 8.

**Boy George Michael?**  
Ever seen them together?  
Quotes, page 8.



## Turnabout's fair play.

Advance would like to say a big "Thank you" to the staff, management, guest performers and customers of the Jungle Lounge for their "Turnabout" fundraiser last Tuesday, April 18. for more information about Advance, please call (615) 385-4283.

**Advance**  
the Political Action Committee of  
the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance

## Mercy buckets, we're aglow with Pride.

The Nashville Pride Week Committee thanks Steve Smith and Warehouse 28 for the "Aglow with Pride" kickoff fundraiser. The seed money from this event will help bring Renée McCoy, executive director of the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, and Deidre McCalla, Olivia recording artist, to Nashville in June, among other things. Join us for our next meeting, Sunday, April 30, at 1 p.m. and our fundraiser at Ralph's on Saturday, May 6. Phone (615) 297-4293 for more information.

Nashville Pride Week '89

## Myth #3: Chiropractic adjustments hurt

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## Bedded out lately?

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## D A T E S

### MEMPHIS

#### Mondays

**Gay Alternative Hour** Radio show, WEVL-FM 90, 6-7pm.  
**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

#### Tuesdays

**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30 and 8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

#### Wednesdays

**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

#### Thursdays

**P-FLAG** (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Support group, St. John's Episcopal Church, 322 S Greer. 1st Thursday only. Info 901 761-1444.  
**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30pm. Info 901 272-9459.  
**Into the Light** (Women's Alcoholics Anonymous) Meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 276-7379.

#### Fridays

**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 5:30 and 10pm. Info 901 272-9459.

#### Saturdays

**Twisted Sisters** (ACOA) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Noon. Info 901 276-7379.  
**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

#### Sundays

**Agape New Life Church** Sunday School, 9:30am. Worship service, 11am. Info 901 276-1872.  
**Holy Trinity Community Church** Worship service, 11am. 1216 Forrest Ave. Info 901 726-9443.  
**Into the Light** (Women's Alcoholics Anonymous) Meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Noon. Info 901 276-7379.  
**Phoenix** (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. 8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

### NASHVILLE

#### Mondays

**Gay Overeaters Anonymous** Open meeting for lesbian and gay overeaters. MCC, 5:30pm. Info 615-327-4614.  
**Nashville CARES** HIV+ Education/Support Group. 6:30pm. ARC/AIDS Support Group, bimonthly. 6:30pm. Family Support Group, bimonthly. 6:30pm. Info 615-385-1510.  
**Lambda Group** Closed Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for gay men and lesbians, Unitarian Church. 8pm.  
**MAGNET** (Married and Gay Network) Support group for married gay men. 1st & 3rd Mondays only. MCC. 8pm. Info 615-320-0288.

#### Tuesdays

**Nashville CARES** ARC/AIDS Support Group. 4pm. Info 615-385-1510.  
**AI-Anon** Closed meeting, MCC. 6:30pm.  
**P-FLAG** Meeting of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, 4th Tuesday only. Unitarian Church. 7:30pm. Info 615-662-0332.  
**MTSU Lambda Association** Meeting for lesbian and gay Middle Tennessee State University students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Murfreesboro. 7pm. Info 615-890-3787.  
**Sober Sisters** (Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous) Closed meeting, MCC. 8pm.  
**Gay Cable Network** Viacom Channel 35 (Community Access Television). 9pm.

#### Wednesdays

**Sex Addicts Anonymous** Closed meeting for gay men and lesbians. MCC. 5:30pm.  
**Nashville CARES** ARC/AIDS Support Group. 6:30pm. Info 615-385-1510.

#### Thursdays

**Gay Overeaters Anonymous** Open meeting for lesbian and gay overeaters. MCC. 5:30pm. Info 615-327-4614.  
**Nashville CARES** Visualization Group. 6:30pm. Info 615-385-1510.  
**Vanderbilt Lambda Association** Meeting for gay and lesbian Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff and alumni. President's House, Peabody Campus, alternates weekly with Film Series (see Special Events). 7pm. Info 615-297-5352.  
**Alternatives** (Alcoholics Anonymous) Closed meeting for lesbians and gay men, MCC. 8pm.  
**Lesbian Adult Children of Alcoholics** (ACOA) Meeting. 8pm. Info 615-385-4776 or 615-352-5823.

#### Fridays

**Sex Addicts Anonymous** Closed meeting, MCC. 5pm.  
**Gay Parents Support Group** Meeting, MCC. 1st Friday only. 7pm. Info 615-831-2941 or 615-320-0288.  
**Alcoholics Anonymous Program Study Group** Meeting, Belmont United Methodist. 7:30 pm.

#### Saturdays

**Nashville CARES** HIV/ARC Support Group, bimonthly. 4pm. Info 615-385-1510.  
**Metropolitan Community Church** Mortgage Meal, all you can eat. 7:30pm. \$5.  
**Gay Cable Network** Viacom Channel 35 (Community Access Television). 8pm.

#### Sundays

**Metropolitan Community Church** Worship services, 11am and 7pm. Info 615-320-0288.

### Special Events

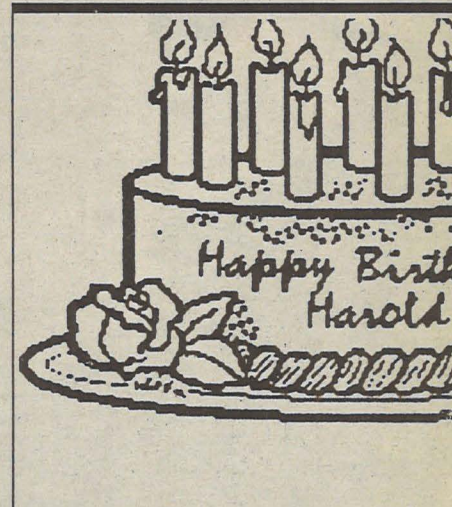
#### Saturday, April 22

**Picnic** Vanderbilt Lambda potluck. Volleyball. Children welcome. No grills provided, no alcohol. Edwin Warner Park, site #8, Nashville. Free. 3pm. Info (615) 297-5352.

**Dance** *Spring Dance*, Gay Women's Social Group, Memphis. BYOB. \$3 donation, \$5 couple. 8pm. Info 901-327-6165.

**Party** *Spring Fling*, Black and White Men Together, Memphis. 8pm. Info 901-452-5894.

**Play** *The Boys in the Band*, by Mart Crowley. Performed by the Memphis troupe, directed by Dennis Massey. Presented by Dare to benefit Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance. Metropolitan Community Church, 131 15th Av North, Nashville. \$5. 9pm. Info 615-327-DARE.



#### The Boys in the Band

#### Saturday, April 22 - Sunday, April 23

**AIDS Memorial Quilt Display** The NAMES Project's Quilt, on display at Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center South Exhibition Hall. Free. Info 615-385-AIDS.

#### Thursday, April 27

**Film** *Parting Glances*, sponsored by Vanderbilt Lambda Association. 220 Garland Hall, Nashville. 7pm. \$1 donation. Info 615-297-5352.

#### Saturday, April 29

**Carwash and Yard Sale** Benefits the Nashville Numbers softball team. Parking lot of the Chute, 2535 Franklin Rd, Nashville. Info 615-297-4571.

#### Sunday, April 30

**Planning Meeting** Meet to plan Nashville Lesbian and Gay Pride Week '89, Nashville. 10am. Info 615-297-4293.

#### Saturday, May 6

**Benefit** For Nashville Lesbian and Gay Pride Week '89. At Ralph's Rutledge Hill Tavern, 2nd Ave South, Nashville. Info 615-297-4293.

Your nonprofit event can be listed free in *Dares*. Write to Dare, Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204-0422, or phone 615 327-3273 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. Deadline noon Tuesday for publication next Friday.

# BRIEFS

from STAFF REPORTS

## California: no gay student housing

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, officials have denied a request to allow same-sex couples to live in school-owned housing allotted to married couples. The Associated Student Senate proposed that the university make the housing available to lesbian and gay couples, but the proposal was turned down, because of what officials said were legal problems and a shortage of housing for married students.

Student Senator Kevin Goebel, author of the proposal, said that the body would pursue the matter, and had begun meeting with representatives from the National Center for Lesbian Rights (formerly the Lesbian Rights Project) to discuss available legal challenges to the decision, as well as ways to apply pressure to get the administration to change the policy. •

## New company formed to hire PWAs

MULTITASKING SYSTEMS OF NEW YORK, Inc., a non-profit provider of photocopying and other office services, has been formed specifically to hire people with AIDS (PWAs) and AIDS-related complex (PWARCs). The New York Times reported that the new company has ten employees, all of whom have AIDS, ARC or are HIV-positive.

"We noticed that patients were either fired from their jobs when their employers learned of the AIDS diagnosis or they were unable to continue in physically demanding or psychologically stressful jobs, so we decided to develop an alternative work center where people could work part-time on flexible shifts," according to Linda J. Lauberstein, a hematologist and professor at the New York University Medical Center.

"Patients do better when they can work...It...keeps you from being isolated and from focusing all attention on illness," she said. •

## Naked swimmers arrested

NORTON, OHIO, POLICE ARRESTED FOUR GAY MEN for swimming naked in an outdoor hot tub at the Loyal Oak Health and Swim Club, charging them with public indecency for being nude in the club's hot tub. The club allows nude swimming after 11 p.m.

The raid was staged after a neighbor, Edward Stukovsky, complained that he had watched through binoculars as the men "fondled" one another atop the pool's 25-foot slide.

The four were found guilty last November, but have appealed their convictions, charging that the arrests were unlawful and politically motivated.

"The innuendo and write-ups in the mass media hinted that this was a gay sin pool and these four men were sinners," said Thelma Furry, attorney for the four men. •

## ...getting personal

• continued from page 1

By Sunday night, Randy's pen pal had decided he liked Nashville enough to consider relocating here, maybe even enrolling at Nashville Tech and getting a job.

"I told him that he could take me to work the next day and use my car to run errands," Randy said. "Monday morning, I mentioned something about needing groceries and he offered to go to the store, so I stopped at the bank machine and got \$20 so he could do that."

When the five o'clock whistle blew and Randy prepared to leave work, his pen pal was no where to be found.

"Five-thirty came and he still wasn't there. I knew I had been had," he said. "I thought sure he had stolen my car."

Calling on a friend for help, Randy went home — and found a note, which told him his car could be found at the downtown bus terminal.

Later, he discovered several items missing from his apartment.

"The next day as things began hitting home, I really became depressed. I felt so stupid for falling for his line," Randy said. "Now, looking back at everything that happened, I realize I should have gotten suspicious. But I was too trusting."

"Now I wonder if the guy was really gay or if he was just pulling off some scam?"

Randy now considers himself lucky, considering the other possibilities. And he was more than a little gun-shy about answering personal ads in the future.

However, on the Friday before his weekend guest arrived, Randy had received a packet of

letters in answer to a personal ad he ran in *Dare*.

"Those letters had a redeeming effect. I got the letters when I needed something to lift my spirits," Randy said.

Out of the more than ten replies he received, he has met at least five of the writers. Much to his relief, he said, they were all honest and friendly.

"The very first person I met through the personal ad in *Dare* was very nice and I could tell from the start we could become very good friends. The interesting thing was that the people who answered all said they never went out much or had just relocated to Nashville and didn't know how to meet people," Randy said.

And they all gave very accurate descriptions of themselves: "Everything the first guy wrote was exactly as it really was."

"I think personals are not that popular in Nashville yet because people are afraid they'll get all sorts of crazies answering them. But they're really a good way of meeting people," he said. "That's the very reason I ran one. I don't go out to the bars that much and how else are you going to meet someone? Sure, every so often a friend might introduce you to someone. But that doesn't happen very often."

Despite his experience with the Army vet, Randy said he would probably answer another personal ad in the future, but would be much more careful.

"And not so trusting of someone, believing everything they say," Randy conceded. "And I would encourage other people to try the personals. It's a good means of meeting someone. And who knows what it could lead to?" •

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3 - 7 pm

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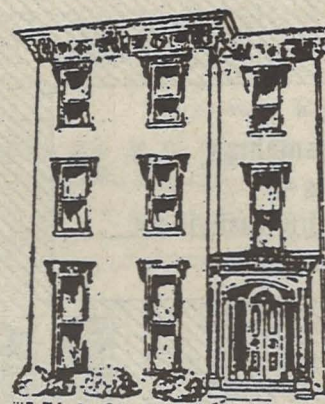


2311 Franklin Road, Nashville  
615 269-5318 • Open 3 pm-1 am



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april 25-27

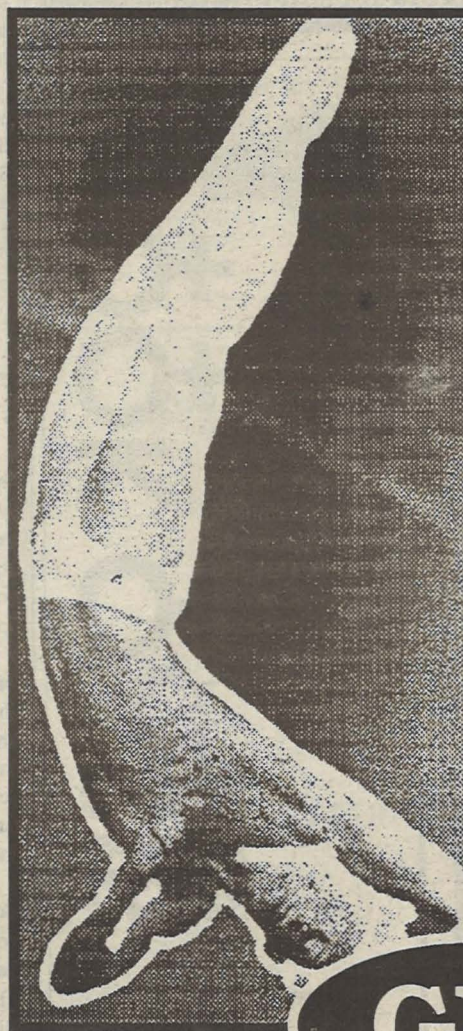
1713 church street nashville, tn 37203  
615-329-3480



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Friday and Saturday  
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get one free with this ad.  
Good through May 1.



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Tuesday Night Fever

Dance Floor Opens at 8 pm

Rachel Slurr's Modern Music

Draft Beer and Cooler Blast

\$3.00

8 pm - Midnight

Thursdays

Male Dance Contest

Back by Popular Demand

\$150.00 Cash Prize to Winner

\$3.00 Cover

\$1.00 Optional Beer Blast

8 pm - Midnight

And Drink Specials

Judy Eron, LCSW  
Licensed Clinical Social Worker  
Jim Siebold, PhD  
Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Individual and Couples Counseling  
615 329-1656

## Nashville CARES. Won't you care, too?

Nashville Council on AIDS Resources, Education and Services  
Box 25107, Nashville, TN 37202  
Education call (615) 385-AIDS  
For information on individual or group counseling  
call (615) 385-1510

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## Hands On Massage Clinic

Certified Massage Therapist  
615 758-7458  
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## Aid to End AIDS. Help us help.

Aid to End AIDS Committee (ATEAC)  
Box 40389, Memphis, TN 38174-0389  
M-F 3:30 pm - 11 pm Sat, Sun 7:30 - 11 pm  
call (901) 458-AIDS  
Answering service 24 hours call (901) 762-8401

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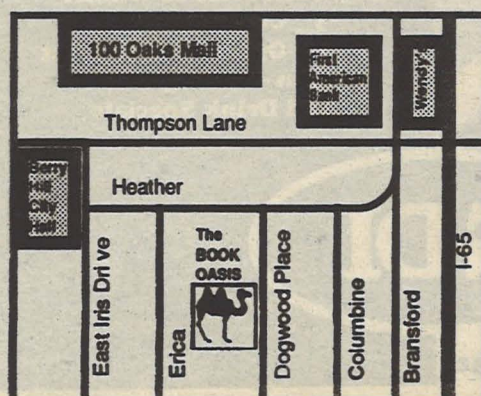
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# Why are some people homosexual?

Part one of a two-part series  
by **JEFF ELLIS**  
Managing Editor

IT IS A QUESTION THAT has baffled scientists, psychologists, parents and the like for centuries.

Even before Alfred Kinsey released his famous report, in which he found that at least one in ten people might be homosexual, an answer was sought.

And although strides have been made in the lesbian/gay civil rights movement in the past few years, the question remains the same.

Why are some people homosexual?

Although there is no clear consensus among experts, there is a growing feeling among some that the "cause" for homosexuality may be biological.

"People are moving in the direction of saying there are very early influences that may indeed be biological," said James Krijeski, chair of the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) committee on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues.

Since the APA removed homosexuality from its list of disorders in 1973, there has been a move away from earlier ideas about what causes one person to be homosexual while nine other people are heterosexual.

Perhaps the most common theory has to do with domineering mothers, distant fathers or child abusers. Those once-popular theories are debunked by any examination of the myriad personalities who are homosexual.

Today, many researchers are looking at pre-birth causes, including genetic or hormonal differences, that might make some people naturally homosexual and others naturally heterosexual.

However, other experts contend that homosexual orientation is the result of a combination of pre-birth and early childhood events. Still others argue that sexual orientation is not an innate quality, but rather a conscious choice.

Even among those researchers who ascribe

a biological source for homosexuality, there is still much debate: If sexual orientation is determined before birth, what causes it? Can environmental factors modify sexual orientation? Do biological theories, usually based on data gathered from gay men, apply to lesbians?

"I'm open to the idea that homosexuality is caused by a combination of things, but I really think all those things happen before someone is born," said Lee Ellis, a sociologist at Minot (South Dakota) State University.

Ellis' research, into the role of prenatal hormonal events, produces another potentially controversial question: Does stress during pregnancy alter the production of sex hormones in the mothers, thus changing the hormonal levels in the brain of the fetus and does this affect sexual orientation?

Ellis' research does include data supplied by mothers of gay men who remember periods of high stress during pregnancy, especially during the second trimester. He plans a more in-depth study of some 7,000 mothers and their children to further test his theory.

A STUDY CONDUCTED by Richard Pillard, of the Boston University School of Medicine, found that 22 percent of gay men had gay or bisexual brothers, while just 4 percent of heterosexual men did. That, according to Pillard, may indicate genetic predisposition toward homosexuality.

There are, however, other experts who sneer at genetic theories and conclude that all people are born with a capacity for all forms of sexuality, but most limit their behavior because of socialization.

Past studies suggest that at least 20 percent of men have had at least one homosexual experience, but less than 10 percent are gay throughout life. Some research suggests that less than 5 percent of women are lesbians.

Results of a study conducted by the United States government, which many experts believe may prove Kinsey's one in ten figure to be wrong, are expected to be released sometime later this year. •

## ...lend an ear

• continued from page 10

another person. Dearhearts, we all know that the rest is history. And...why don't you wish this happy couple a big happy first anniversary when you next see them, because April 29 will be their special day. Congrats to Joey and Jeff! May you have oodles more years together.

I heard there were some mighty odd goings-on at the jungle last Tuesday night. Seems there was a fundraiser for Advance, and the show was great. That's not the odd part. Who the hell is Wanda Monnaie, and what is her relationship to *Dare* advertising sales manager Ann Taylor? Perhaps a new career for the multi-talented Taylor?

Not to mention the wonderful Rhett and Company, Erica Stormy (no, Scotty McMahan, you may not call her the Stormtrooper, you naughty, naughty boy) Knight, Ophelia Balls (!), Cookie the Butch Bouncer, Sophina Peters, Gidget LaSmelle (Bridget LaBelle's nasty cousin), and the list goes on and on and on and...

And speaking of Advance, what are you doing Saturday night? Well, I know where you should be for at least part of the evening. The Memphis troupe that did such a bang-up job of

*Boys in the Band* will present the show at Metropolitan Community Church in Nashville at 9:00 p.m., in a special benefit performance for Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance. *Dare* publisher Stuart Bivin says that director Dennis Massey and company are rarin' to go, and that it's a show not to be missed.

Sort of like the Warehouse 28 fundraiser last Sunday for Nashville Pride Week. Marc Weber's Branches catered what was rumored to be a fabulous spread, including a to-die-for crab-and-asparagus dip (the secret ingredient is cream cheese — you heard it here). The inimitable Thom Carpenter, of Effects, spearheaded the faboo décor. And of course, the wonderful troupe included Dana Alexander, April Stevens, Déjourné Shounté, Bianca Paige, Monica Munro and Shelly Stone performing while the always-dapper Steve Smith emceed.

So come spend five bucks enjoying a classic gay play and help one of the worthier causes around. Come on, you sent Jimmy Swaggart hundreds, didn't you? I won't tell if you'll come make a clean breast of it, so to speak.

And that's another *Sociables*, dearhearts. Keep in touch, or I'll tell everyone you really did keep all your Donny Osmond records. •

# Forum hears black l/g view

by **HARRISON HICKS**  
Contributing Writer

**PATRICE LEE REMEMBERS** it as "probably the lowest point of my life," the night she was publicly separated from her church in Philadelphia for being a lesbian.

As one of two speakers addressing the problems of black lesbians and gay men, Lee shared her experience of that eventful night with an audience of about 30 people at the latest Metropolitan Community Church/Nashville (MCC) *Church and Community Forum* last Saturday.

That night, Lee recalled, she was summoned to a special meeting of her church, the same church she had attended since childhood and distinguished herself in as an adult with her leadership in the church choir and other church functions. For Lee, the church had become almost a second home, and doubly important to her since the pastor of the church also happened to be her father.

Lee knew that her parents, both being very conservative religiously, were having problems dealing with her lesbianism, which had been revealed just shortly before, but she said she was totally unprepared for their reaction. Her father, as elder of the church, presided over the special church meeting, which contrary to Lee's expectations, instead of rewarding her for her services to the church, convened to separate her from the body of the church.

"On that day," Lee said, "I was publicly, without any passion on my father's side, expurgated from the community, from the church, and from my family, and it was done [in the manner of] 'this is it, you are not welcome here, you will not come back here — at all.'"

"I had always thought I knew what it was like to be alone," said Lee, "and now here was everything I was familiar with, literally, very concretely together, turning its back." **SINCE THEN, LEE SAID SHE** has been putting the pieces of her life back in order.

"What I've done," she said, "is started to reconcile my relationship with the communities that I live in with the God that I believe in and with myself."

That reconciliation included dealing with the boundaries she had created in leading her double life as a married woman and a lesbian.

When she was just out of high school, Lee's parents had pushed her into marriage at the age of seventeen. For a while, she said, she was able to keep up the pretense of marriage, but it was, according to Lee, "a very empty existence."

That was when she started leading what she

called her "double life," attending to marriage on one front and venturing out to the lesbian bars in Philadelphia on another.

Then, said Lee, she met "the magic lady," the one she wanted to share her life with. Lee invited her to a church function, at which Lee's mother detected something between the women. Lee's parents confronted her with their suspicions, but Lee said she stood her ground.

"I could not deny what was important to me any more," she said. Shortly thereafter, her church dismissed Lee.

Today, Lee said, "It doesn't take the acceptance of any particular person or group of people any more for me." Though she added a happy note when she said that she recently has been in contact with her mother, who is planning a visit to Tennessee for Mother's Day.

**RELIGION ALSO PLAYED** a large part in the other featured speaker's life. An anonymous Nashville theology student, the panelist told a similar story of being raised in a conservative religious family, also with a Pentecostal minister as his father.

Speaking of his struggle with his sexuality, the panelist noted an overwhelming homophobia in the black community.

"To hear the oppression come from an oppressed group," he said, was distressing to him, and asked of black churches, "Where is the compassion? Where is the love?"

Both panelists agreed that there is a lack of support systems for black lesbians and gay men in Nashville. "You spend a lot of time in isolation," said Lee.

Paul Tucker, MCC pastor and moderator of the discussion, expressed hope that the forum would raise the consciousness of Nashville's lesbian and gay community and make things easier for the city's black lesbians and gay men. Tucker acknowledged some problems in the past with racist tendencies in MCC and other parts of Nashville's lesbian and gay community, but said, "You don't see so much of that now."

Tucker also noted that the largely-white MCC/Nashville now has several black members, but he hopes to improve on those numbers and provide in MCC a space where black lesbians and gay men can meet with one another and the rest of Nashville's lesbian and gay community.

Lee agreed with Tucker that diversity in Nashville's lesbian and gay community is something to be desired. But, she noted that, in her experience, people were often more similar than dissimilar.

As Lee stated, concluding the discussion, "I'm human. That's the bottom line for me." •

*"I had always thought I knew what it was like to be alone, and now here was everything I was familiar with, literally, very concretely together, turning its back."*

## ...Nashville Pride Week plans

•continued on page 1

begin Saturday, June 17, with an art auction to raise money for Metropolitan Community Church/Nashville and the new AIDS-service organization, AIDS/Southern Kentucky (ASK). A picnic, tentatively scheduled for Edwin Warner Park, is slated to end the week's events on Sunday, June 25.

Campbell urged those interested in helping with preparations for the events to attend the next committee meeting, Sunday, April 30. She also reminded any interested organizations or groups to start thinking about floats and banners for this year's parade.

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## I N T E R

Neil Miller is the author of *In Search of Gay America: Women and Men in a Time of Change*, published this month by Atlantic Monthly Press (324 pages, \$18.95, hardcover), which is reviewed by Jeff Ellis on page 9.

Among the places Miller visited while doing research for the book were Johnson City, Knoxville and Memphis; substantial portions of *In Search of Gay America* are devoted to descriptions of gay and lesbian life in those cities.

After completing a two-week, seven-city tour to promote the book, Miller would like to begin work on a new book, probably a biography, perhaps of a gay person.

**Dare Book Editor Sherre Dryden** reached Miller by telephone at his home in Somerville, Massachusetts last week. —Editor

**SHERRE DRYDEN:** Why don't you start by telling a bit about yourself.

**NEIL MILLER:** I'm a journalist by profession. I'm 43. I was the news editor of the *Gay Community News*, which is a weekly gay paper in Boston. I did that in the seventies, which is a while ago. I've been a free-lance writer and was a staff writer for the Boston *Phoenix*, which is a weekly paper here — not a gay paper. It's the alternative paper in Boston. I've done a lot of free-lancing for other publications in Boston.

This is my first book. What I tried to do in the book was sort of first person reportage. I travelled around interviewing gay people all over the country; to different gay communities talking about people's lives and my impressions of gay and lesbian life.

One of the things that I was really trying to do was not to focus particularly on the large urban centers — New York, San Francisco, Chicago, L.A., whatever. I tried to get a broader picture of what it's like to be a gay person in places like Tennessee — in smaller towns in the South and Midwest and in rural areas. Some big cities, too, but I was trying to give a wider range of people's experiences of life.

That was my main purpose in writing this book. And I thought, it's about 20 years after Stonewall, which is credited with being the beginning of the gay and lesbian liberation movement.

I wanted to see where things were and how much had changed.

Living in a big city that is relatively accepting of gay people, where things are relatively secure, I thought the real test of how much things have changed was to try to get out of the bigger cities and travel around. I spent two years writing and researching this book.

**How different is it out here? Is it significantly different?**

I think it really varies. One of the things I felt

was happening in a city like Boston was that gay people were less marginalized and more able to be open, and integrate their sexuality with the rest of their life. Not just live in a little gay pocket or not be in the closet, but be — their life was in many respects like everyone else's. That's basically what I found traveling around as well.

There was still [less change] in a lot of smaller places — far smaller than Nashville, like Johnson City. Well, Johnson City has a gay group. But I was in Selma, Alabama, where every gay man, so I was told, was in a heterosexual marriage. It really seemed like back in the Fifties in terms of a place like that. But there were a lot of other kinds of small towns and rural areas where I found that people could be open and still be very involved in things.

I went to this tiny town in Missouri that had a gay mayor. He's now in his fifth term in office.

*"I tried to get a broader picture of what it's like to be a gay person in places like Tennessee — in smaller towns in the South and Midwest and in rural areas."*

It's a town of about 418 people. In his latest race I think he didn't even have any opposition. This is not exactly typical, but I did find some gay dairy farmers in Minnesota.

I found a couple of women that live on the outskirts of Knoxville, a place called Louisville. It's a tiny place, not exactly a suburb of Knoxville, but an exurb or something.

One of the women had purchased a herd of cows, a strange breed that was in danger of dying out or something. She managed to buy it and was living on this property where she had grown up. Her mother was living next door and she was busily starting to raise these cows.

These are just not your stereotypical gay experiences. She was active in the gay group in Knoxville and sort of an example that there were a lot more options to her and to gay

people around than there had been. I saw this both in larger cities and smaller towns.

**People have the perception that things are much more repressed here in the South than in other parts of the country, even in southern cities.**

I spent some time in Knoxville, I spent some time in Birmingham — those were the two southern cities I spent the most time in, and also Jackson, Mississippi. I do believe the South is the most socially conservative area of the country. I thought that in those cities people were somewhat less open than in many northern cities and certainly than the west coast.

One thing that I generally tended to find was that in the last several years in many of the big cities you have an openly gay middle class — doctors, lawyers, professionals. There are still plenty of those people in the closet, but you're seeing that more and more. I didn't see that very much in Knoxville and Birmingham. People are still afraid to come out, especially the middle class. I think to have a strong and influential gay community you have to have those kind of middle class people be open about being gay. I didn't find that in those southern cities. I thought that was an indication that, at least in those cities, things were a little slower.

**How did you actually go about doing the research? Where did you go, how did you meet people?**

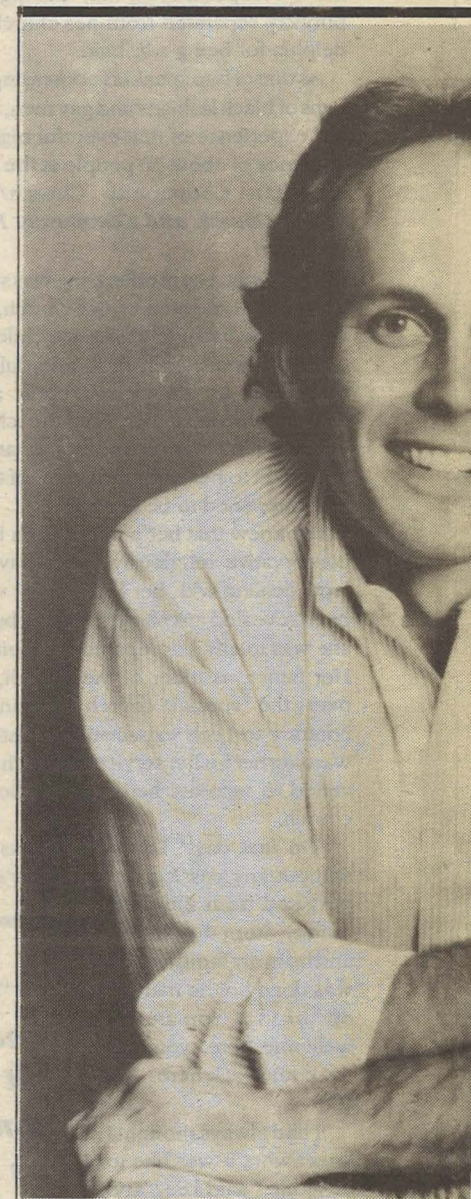
Often I'd write to different gay groups in different places. I'd establish one contact person in a city or in an area. Some things were different.

For example, I went out to Knoxville with [National Gay and Lesbian Task Force staffer] Sue Hyde. I knew she was going and she had told me about the case of these two guys in Johnson City who had been given five years for having sex in a parked car.

Very early in my research I decided that I wanted to go to the South. I thought that the South was probably the most socially conservative area of the country. So I wrote to somebody in Birmingham and I wrote to somebody in Jackson. I'd get places and they would — because people were generally very nice and very helpful — suggest people for me to talk to.

I wanted to interview a gay or a lesbian coal miner — I just got this idea. I started calling up different women's groups in West Virginia. I looked in the *Gayellow Pages* but in West Virginia there was really very little. So I would call the head of NOW in some city and she'd recommend me to somebody else.

Finally I got in touch with somebody in Morgantown who was gay, but not a coal



**Neil M**

*author of In Search*

miner. I asked her if she knew any lesbian coal miners or gay coal miners. She didn't but eventually I went out there. I spent four or five days there and eventually did find a lesbian coal miner. That was one of the more difficult things.

**Did you encounter any problems being a man doing research about women?**

It's hard for me to know. I found women generally to be as receptive as men. There may have been some separatist lesbians who wouldn't want to talk to me, so I missed that part of things. It's hard for me to know if women would have been a little less open with me. But I thought people generally were pretty open.

I was in San Antonio, for example, and did a lot of interviews with Latina lesbians. I thought they were some of the most open with me of

# R V I E W



PHOTO BY STEVE SAVAGE

## Miller

### rch of Gay America

anybody that I interviewed anywhere. Maybe that has to do with their culture or something. They were far more open than a lot of men I talked to. But there may have been women who were more guarded with me.

**You mention Latinas — what about cultural differences?**

I think it's harder to have a gay identity if you're black or Hispanic than perhaps if you're white. That's just my perception. I got the sense that while it might be acceptable in the black community, for males anyway, to have sex with other males — or be a little more acceptable than among whites — if you took on a gay or lesbian identity it was harder.

**What about tensions between the people who are active in gay and lesbian movement politics and the people who aren't?**

I think it's been a major problem for years. I was extremely aware of it when I was editor for *Gay Community News* back in the seventies and it's still true. I think it's weakened the gay movement in general that there's been this small group of activists and then this larger group of apolitical people.

But I found in a lot of places that AIDS, at least among the men, was breaking that down to some extent. There were lots of people who have previously been quite apolitical and kind of looked down on gay activists, that because of AIDS were getting more involved in the community and felt a reason to be active, felt a sense of crisis because their friends were getting sick and dying. That it was important to be a part of the political end of things.

You have to somehow get the mass of gay people involved. I do think that AIDS has broken that down some. But its one of the reasons why the gay movement's been rather weak over the years, although Nashville, from what I read, does seem pretty activist.

**The March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights seems to have stirred people to action in Nashville. Was that the case elsewhere?**

I thought it was. I also thought that period seemed to correspond with ACT UP groups being formed all over the country. I thought that was sort of a direct result.

Shortly afterwards, I think, in Boston they were trying to pass a gay rights bill in the legislature and all of these people chained themselves to the gallery. There seemed to be a lot of civil disobedience type activity, but I think that happened in the bigger cities. But that is my general impression, that that's what happened.

**What about relationships between gay men and lesbians?**

Again, that was something that was mixed. I was in Miami and it seemed like the men's community and the women's community were completely split.

I think that's been an issue over the years in the lesbian and gay community, that women and men often didn't work together. I think that's been breaking down and there is a lot more working together.

I think again that AIDS has been a factor. A lot of lesbians have gotten involved in AIDS organizing and gay men have realized they need lesbians to be on their side. I was somewhat encouraged by that. I also thought that in smaller places men and women tended to be closer together.

I thought separatism was kind of on the decline. Again, I don't know.

A lot of women felt that many gay organizations continue to be dominated by men and

that was very frustrating. For example, in Knoxville Ten Percent, my impression was that some of the women felt that the men were running things, that it was a mostly male organization. There's generally been a struggle for women to be in high positions or to be influential in a lot of gay groups.

**What about lesbian and gay activism in other arenas?**

I tended to find that a lot of working within the Democratic Party at least seemed to be moving forward. There were all these Gay Democratic Clubs all over the country. Movement in that direction tended to be stronger than in had some years ago.

Still, there are plenty of people who are concerned with forging alliances with other groups and being outside of that party arena. I think particularly as the gay middle class gets

*"Well, it was fun just going to all these out of the way places I would never go to. I enjoyed the travel. I went to a black gay bar in Memphis. I really thought it was fun and exciting, it was so different than anything I'd experienced."*

more active politically, that those kind of people tend to gravitate toward the Democratic Party.

As you get more openly gay elected officials that's also had an impact. In Massachusetts we have two openly gay congressmen, Barney Frank and Gerry Studds. And I think there were something like 90 openly gay delegates to the Democratic Party national convention. As to how fertile a field it is, I think things looked better a few years ago.

The Democratic Party is trying to reach out to, let's call it the Southern white male. I think the Democratic Party's in a dilemma. They feel that they're perceived as too liberal. I think it's important to try to work on all these levels, in all these different directions.

I wish that there were gay people who

would start to get more active in the Republican Party, if the Republican Party would let them. Maybe this is absurd, because they seem to be so homophobic and anti-gay, but we seem to be electing Republican presidents every election and its important for there to be some gay people who have access to them.

To try to determine AIDS policy, let's say, and try to have an impact on their thinking. I think the reality of it is that the political process is controlled by two major parties and it's important to have some impact on them to get what we want. I think it's important to try to make progress in every institution. On the other hand, will things ever really change?

**Do you think lesbian and gay movement activists see devoting energy to other organizations as undermining the cause?**

Possibly. It's tough. People have a lot of identities. You're not just a lesbian, you're a woman and those issues are important.

Let's say that lesbians are involved in NOW and are in the closet. I really don't think, if that's their main energy, it's certainly not helpful to the gay movement. We need a strong gay and lesbian movement. But I also think it's important for gay people to be visible in other organizations, whether it be NOW or the Democratic Party. But to be open about it.

I do think there are enough gay people out there that you can do all sorts of things. Also, you want to lead a full life, your whole identity can't be gay or lesbian.

**What was the most fun thing you did?**

Well, it was fun just going to all these out of the way places I would never go to. I enjoyed the travel.

I went to a black gay bar in Memphis. I really thought it was fun and exciting, it was so different than anything I'd experienced.

It was fun to spend a night on a dairy farm and go help milk cows the next day. Well, I didn't exactly milk the cows. I watched people milk them.

I went to this music festival in San Antonio. It was called *conjunto* music. It was Mexican bands, a special kind of music that uses accordions a lot.

It's very traditional sort of music. I went there with all these Latina lesbians and danced and really had a great time. It was not a gay event, it was a big festival with people selling all kinds of food. That was fun.

I liked the South, too. The people there were open and friendly. The friendliness wasn't fake.

I really enjoyed the fact that I could get in a car and travel around to all sorts of places and I had a reason to do it. And meet all sorts of people. I really enjoyed that. •



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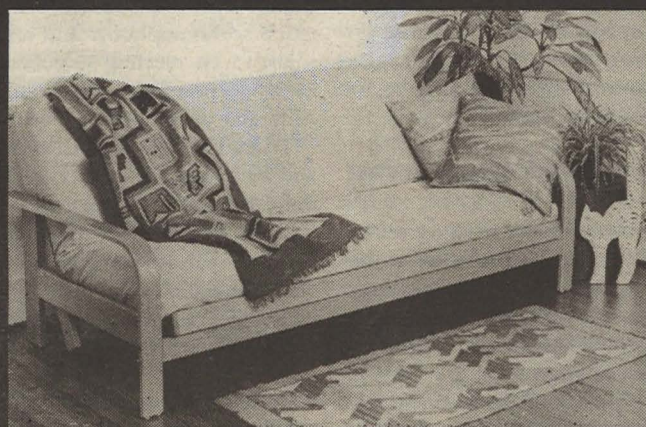
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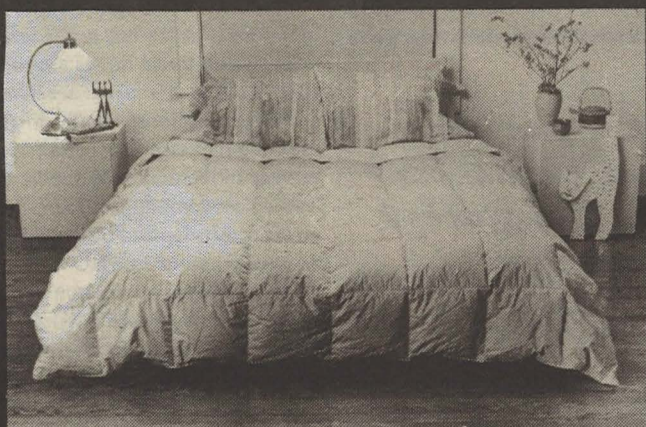
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# PAGES

## Talking Back

*Talking Back: thinking feminist, thinking black.* by bell hooks. Boston: South End Press, 1989. 184 pp. \$10.00 paperback.  
reviewed by **SHERRE DRYDEN**

Book Editor

**AMONG THE CHILDHOOD** memories that shape my adult self is an event that took place when I was 10 or 11.

I spent time each summer with my maternal grandmother, who lived outside Athens, Georgia. I thought of her as a strong woman. The middle child in a family of many children, she had been reared in poverty. As a young woman she worked in sewing plants, leaving my mother and my uncle with a succession of black women who tended the children and the house. My grandfather was a construction worker. I never wondered how it was that a family that could barely afford to keep itself could afford to pay a housekeeper.

Later, my grandmother set herself up in business as a seamstress. Black women still worked for her, cleaning the house, doing finger work on the clothes she made, helping put up vegetables in the summer. For wages, added to whatever money she gave them, they were given cloth she could not use, clothes she did not want, food we would not eat. Sometimes she would tell me to keep my mouth shut as she lied to them, giving them big enough pieces of cloth to make dresses for themselves, a new sweater or a paper sack of butter beans bought from the man down the road.

I never thought about it twice. It seemed clear to me that these black women were my grandmother's friends. White women only came to her house to pick out pattern and cloth for a new dress. They left as quickly as possible, not inquiring about her health or her grandchildren or her son in the navy. The black women called her "Miss Clara" and she called them by their first names, but they would talk while they sewed or shelled beans together. They knew each others' cares, what the children and grandchildren were up to, what the crazy lady next door did this time.

**ONE HOT MORNING** my grandmother decided to can peaches. She stayed in the kitchen making syrup and putting the jars into the water bath while one of the black women and I peeled and sliced peaches underneath the pine tree out back.

The woman's name was Shug, short for Sugar. She was tall, with high cheekbones and light skin. She wore a type of cloth hat I don't know a name for, a kind of a cross between a turban and a soldier's cap.

We had worked a long time when my grandmother called me in to get lunch (I was not much of a peach peeler). I made some food, I forget what, and set the table for three.

When my grandmother turned from the stove and saw what I had done she told me to remove Shug's plate from the table.

When I asked why, my grandmother told me that black people (she probably said "colored") and white people didn't mix. That it was not proper for Shug to eat at the table with us. That even if we asked her to, Shug would not sit at the table with us.

Shug ate her lunch standing at the kitchen counter while my grandmother and I sat at the table. My grandmother ate her food, I assume, but I could not eat mine. The grown-up feeling of being allowed to work with the women was gone, too. It took me a long time to figure out

why.

If this reminiscence appears to have little concrete relationship to bell hooks' new book *Talking Back*, appearances are probably correct.

But it was this incident, more than anything else, that I thought of as I read the book. For other white women (and perhaps for white men) who read *Talking Back* it will be incidents like this one that come to mind. Incidents of personal struggle with racism and incidents of the betrayal and oppression of black women by white women. Black or white, if you are Southern and grew up in the segregated South, you will remember.

It is only fair, I think, for me to state clearly that I have immense regard, bordering on idolatry, for bell hooks, whose other name is Gloria Watkins.

When she asked me a question at a conference recently, I was so overwhelmed I was barely able to answer coherently. I have read her works and heard her speak and each time I am inspired.

*Talking Back* is also inspiring. It engages the emotions in two directions; toward Gloria Watkins, growing up black, female and poor in rural Kentucky as well as toward the radical consciousness of bell hooks. This dual track gives the book exceptional power (even for readers who do not already worship the author).

As a primer on critical consciousness, *Talking Back* is gently directive, quietly angry. Largely because of hooks' style — more like conversation around the kitchen table on a summer evening than academic prose — highly controversial and radical thoughts seem obvious. Working for change becomes not only challenging and exciting, but also productive.

Hooks has been taken to task for this style. Critics say it isn't academic enough, that it undermines rather than validates black women as thinkers and scholars. But for most readers, some who I suspect will not admit it, hooks' style breaks down more barriers than it imposes. For some the barriers may simply be suspicions of anything too intellectual. For others they are the self-defensive barriers constructed when we feel threatened. Bell hooks is so swift and gentle that there's little inclination to build defenses.

**TALKING ABOUT GLORIA**, hooks is bravely self-disclosing. Her trust of her audience, for it was obviously difficult to write so much of herself, is touching. Her openness creates a feeling of reciprocity. If she has found it necessary and possible to open up so much of her self, then I (the reader) must not betray that trust.

And it is, finally, the themes of trust and betrayal that run throughout the essays that constitute *Talking Back*.

*Talking Back: thinking feminist, thinking black* is, as hooks describes it, "back-talk." The answers to all of those buts, what-abouts and how-can-yous that she must have been hearing for a long time now. It is also a moving and inspiring call to action for anyone willing to work for liberation. •

## PAGES

**In Search of Gay America**

*In Search of Gay America*, by Neil Miller. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1989. 309 pp. \$18.95, hardcover.

reviewed by **JEFF ELLIS**

Managing Editor

**THROUGHOUT THE** past few years, there seems to have been a groundswell of lesbian and gay activism in the American heartland.

After years of assuming that lesbians and gay men only live in urban areas such as New York, San Francisco, Chicago or Boston, writers and old-guard activists alike have discovered that people are "different" all over the map.

Neil Miller, former news editor of Boston-based *Gay Community News*, is one of those writers who discovered some time ago that the true pulse of the American lesbian/gay movement could perhaps be found somewhere off the beaten, and well-trod, urban path.

*In Search of Gay America*, Miller's record of his journey throughout the country to find

what gay America is all about, is an involving book, both illuminating and reflective in its study of our lives. It's a well-written narrative of one person's view of our culture, incorporating the disparate perspectives of a wide range of people — ranging from the lesbian in Selma, Alabama, who wouldn't let her name be used for fear of reprisals from her neighbors to a Bismarck, N.D., librarian named Darrel Hildebrandt whose life was changed when he tested positive for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

In short, *In Search of Gay America* is a portrait of ourselves, telling the stories of people like you and me.

The book follows much the same circuitous route as was followed by Miller himself during his travels to conduct the interviews which form the bulk of the contents.

We begin our journey in the South, glimpsing life in central Alabama, traveling then to Bunceton, Missouri, meeting the town's openly gay mayor Gene Ulrich. Then it's to Morgantown, W.Va., where we meet a lesbian who worked in a coal mine for 12 years, but left when she realized she was hiding her sexual orientation in order to bring home a paycheck. Hers is a painful story, but one which blends anger with a strong sense of pride.

Miller's journey takes us on a tour of small-town America, into the homes of lesbians and gay men for whom choices are not so easily made as they are for those who can lose themselves in gay urbana. But the picture painted of their lives is not necessarily a bleak one, instead they seem to see their lives as challenges.

"Being civic-minded was the way these gay men coped with being gay in small-town America and, once the initial resistance was overcome, it mostly appeared to work," Miller writes.

**FROM HIS TREK** down Main Street, U.S.A., Miller takes us back to his base in Boston and presents an enlightened view of lesbian motherhood, artificial insemination, adoption and foster parenting, performing admirably as a journalist. That, perhaps, points to the book's greatest strength — it's damn good reporting.

Miller takes an honest look at the AIDS crisis and, through an interview with a man named Frank, summarizes much of the ambivalence and anger we all feel about the disease: "Before AIDS...the future was always bright. Things were always looking up. That just didn't seem true anymore."

Miller's forays into Tennessee — to Memphis, Johnson City and Knoxville — are of immense local interest and, in the end, we tend to come off looking pretty good.

He recounts a visit with the Memphis chapter of Black and White Men Together (BWMT), during which a discussion ensued about the role of blacks in the lesbian and gay civil rights movement.

But perhaps of greater interest is his re-telling of the infamous 1986 Johnson City case in which two men were accused under Tennessee's antiquated sodomy law. His descriptions of the two men and the effects of the case on their lives give the "legend" a more personal, and more frightening, tone.

The case, which has been a rallying point for activists not only in Tennessee but throughout the country, has produced a

reluctant anti-hero. Miller writes of Sue Hyde of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) contacting the two men and asking them to plead innocent in order to test the state's law. They refused and we were all left asking, "Why?"

Miller's book may give us an answer. Jordan Weiss-Bartok, a friend of one of the defendants, vented her anger at NGLTF for trying to use the case to help bring about legal changes.

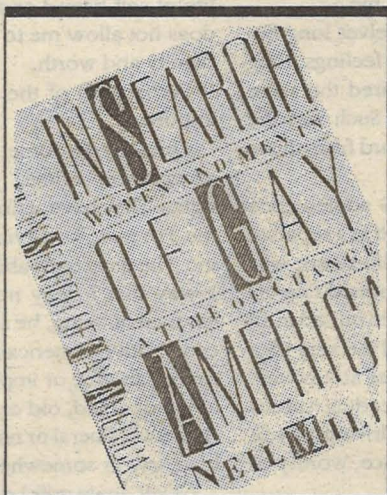
"**THE CONCEPT OF A CAUSE** can overtake the human approach," she said. "The person gets lost. Maybe Larry doesn't feel like saving the world, but that doesn't mean he is letting gay people down. If you have a man who is strong enough, let the ACLU hit it with everything they got. Larry is not that person. But he shouldn't be made to feel he is a coward because he is not."

Reporting like that sends chills up my spine. It makes me feel for Larry and to have some inkling of what he must have gone through — and is probably still reliving.

The strength of Miller's book is most evident in its account of lesbian/gay life in small-town America, which is imbued with an honesty and candor that is refreshing and hopeful. However, when he changes his focus to the "leading lights" of the movement, he seems to be too much in awe of some of his subjects, whom he tends to approach with reticence and restraint, appearing to believe too much of their P.R. pablum-cum-psycho-babble.

The book's title, *In Search of Gay America*, seemed to me at first to be too great an undertaking for anyone. And I was skeptical.

Yet while this is not the definitive work on the subject, it may be the best to date. •



# The Boys are coming, the Boys are coming.



And here's your only chance to see them, Nashville. *Dare* is proud to present the new Memphis production of Mart Crowley's classic 1968 play *The Boys in the Band*, directed by Dennis Massey.

One performance only,  
9:00 p.m., Saturday, April 22,  
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131 15th Avenue North, Nashville.

Admission \$5<sup>00</sup> at the door.

Proceeds benefit Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance.

Presented by special arrangement  
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Questions? Phone the *Dare* office, (615) 327-DARE.

**Dare**

Tennessee's Lesbian and Gay Newsweekly

Dare

Tennessee's Gay and Lesbian Newsweekly  
From the Heart of the American South

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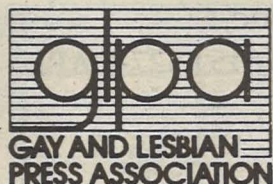
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#### LETTERS

We welcome your letters. Submissions over  
500 words will be considered for publication in the  
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## SOAPBOX

### Dignity and denial

by ROY Q. SANDERS  
Nashville

The Vanderbilt University Community Affairs Board has appointed a subcommittee to make a recommendation about the addition of sexual orientation to the school's antidiscrimination policy, and the subcommittee has held hearings on the matter, accepting testimony both in support of and in opposition to the proposed policy. One of those who spoke in favor of the change was Roy Sanders, a Vanderbilt employee. Here is the text of Sanders' statement to the subcommittee. — Editor

RECENTLY, THERE HAS BEEN a series of letters written to the *Vanderbilt Hustler* that have been both in favor of and opposed to the addition of sexual orientation to the University's anti-discrimination policy.

Reading these letters has strengthened my belief that the policy is not the issue. I do not know that I know the actual issue. There are several possibilities. Is the issue sin? Perhaps it is acceptance, or crime. Is it tolerance and the struggle for basic human rights? Perhaps it is all of these, and perhaps it is none.

When I testified before the Community Affairs Board, I remarked that it seemed amazing to me that we should even be having hearings. I struggled with the fact that my employment should be challenged simply because of who I am and how I have chosen to lead my life.

However, I came to the conclusion that if such a challenge could be made, then I would do what I could to protect myself and those who have chosen to live as I do. Who I am is not a choice. How I choose to live is my choice and one that I alone can make. I have chosen to accept the consequences of leading this lifestyle. I do not ask anyone to accept me. I don't

even ask for you tolerance.

However, I will not stand by and allow you to hurt me or anyone while I have the ability to challenge your actions and indeed even your thinking. I know that it would be difficult if not impossible to change the way you think. I have however, begun to change the way that I think.

For many years, I have been told that the love I hold, that the sexual company I keep is bad, even evil. I believed that I was evil. I was convinced that my essence, my very being was somehow inferior or unworthy of the privileges and happiness experienced by those of more usual feelings and life-styles.

I lived in fear of discovery. I feared that if I were to be discovered my chances for peace and happiness, for fulfillment, would be destroyed. I feared the shame that I would bring upon myself and upon my family. I feared the loss of acceptance and love of people who were and are very important to me.

These fears presented themselves long before I ever chose to act on my feelings, long before I knew others who shared the same thoughts, desires and feelings. Such was the power of the message that I heard from those around me.

AS I WAS JUST ENTERING adolescence and beginning to establish myself as a separate and distinct individual, my self-esteem was shattered when someone mentioned faggots or queers. Accusations were often hurled in all directions, so fearful and hurtful the very idea of being homosexual was to those around me. I even found myself at times spreading rumors and hurting others each time driving myself further away from self-acceptance, worthy of love, worthy of dignity.

Now I find myself on a path to restore my soul, to recapture what for so many years I denied myself. I am a human being who is worthy. Worthy as you are of basic human respect and dignity. I may not agree with you. I may not approve of your lifestyle. I may never. As long as your actions do not hinder me or any other in their pursuit of fulfillment, I will not challenge you. Your life is yours to do with it as you feel you must. Mine is the same.

SO YOU SEE, it is not important that you accept me. It is not important or necessary that you tolerate me. It is not even important that you love me. It is important to me that you allow me to lead my life as I must. If you choose not to, then I will challenge you. You may dismiss me from my employment. You may drive me from my house and my home. You may threaten my life. You may even kill me. You will not, however, drive me again into a life of self-hatred and a hatred of others that does not allow me to see my or their human dignity and worth.

Perhaps all of the issues listed above are important.

Certainly to some, sin is important, as is acceptance, crime, tolerance and human rights. They have at times all been important to me. For now, however, that is not the issue for me. The issue is my ability to live my life in such a way that I deny no one their dignity and essence of being, be she or he African-American, Native American, un-American or any American, free or imprisoned, fat or thin, disabled or abled, old or young, religiously fundamental, liberal or nonreligious, straight, lesbian, gay or somewhere in between.

Never again will I deny mine. •

## SOCIALES

### Lend an ear

by JAAN STURGIS  
Staff Writer

Congratulations and beyond to TIM ROBERTS of Bowling Green fame (that infamous writer for the Louisville Courier-Journal). For what, you say? Well, my dears, Tim has done it again. Boston University has accepted him into their highly selective masters-level program in creative writing. This program selects a mere dozen students each year from the over 200 who apply. We'll miss you, Tim, when you head to the East Coast, but our very best wishes will go with you!

Speaking of Bowling Green — did you know that two Nashvillians (unbeknownst to each other) were in that fair city in the K-Y state the same evening last week? Well, my dears, my sources tell me that TERRY RALSTON was seen dining at one of Bowling Green's finest restaurants. (Why is it that my memory is fading and I can't remember the name?) With whom, you say? Well, the word's out that he's dating a boy named John. John, hmmm. Funny, I've had a John or two in my life, too. They just never seem to have last names.

That same evening, PAUL TUCKER ap-

peared in that same city. Visiting whom? Having supper, I hear.

And speaking of Bowling Green, I attended a party myself there the other day. Who was there? Nashvillians Tucker, JAMES HOLLAND, DEEN THOMPSON, and yours truly. The bunch from Bowling Green was the city's finest, and included FOREST HALFORD, DON SMITH, ROGER BANTON, BILLY ISAACS, TIM ROBERTS and WILLIE SYLVIS.

Willie spent a a goodly amount of time chatting with me. Apparently Willie has worked at the same Bowling Green grocery for 16 years. Imagine that! I can't fathom staying at a job for 16 months, let alone 16 years. Anyway, Willie has worked his way up to product manager (no wisecracks about top fruit, please). In his spare time away from the store, he tells me that he adores shopping (don't we all!) He also loves traveling about the countryside. When asked what he likes to do best in a faraway city he responded with a roaring "shopping," with second runner-up "bar hopping." I myself have only heard about such

things.

Recently, on one of my rare outings in Nashville, I ate at the Sub 'n' Pub. It's a dandy little place near Thompson Lane and Murfreesboro Road. JOEY CHEEK and JEFF POOLE are co-owners of the place, which caters to a mainly-gay clientele on Saturday and Sunday evenings when they feature an all-you-can-pig, er, eat buffet, with wonderful pasta dishes, coleslaw, potato salad and a yummy whipped dessert that maybe, if you ask nicely, Jeff will give you the recipe for.

Of course, I wasn't satisfied with just the info about the restaurant. I wanted to know how this smiling couple met. Well, dearhearts, it appears that Jeff played in a gospel band called the BLACKWOOD BAND and was touring in Albany, Georgia (the American Georgia, not the Russian one).

After their gig for the evening, Jeff returned to his room, alone and (perhaps) a bit sullen. He headed for one of the town's "meat market bars" and saw Joey on the dance floor with

• continued on page 4

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Music - Sergei Prokofiev  
With the Nashville Symphony Orchestra

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Arts Center

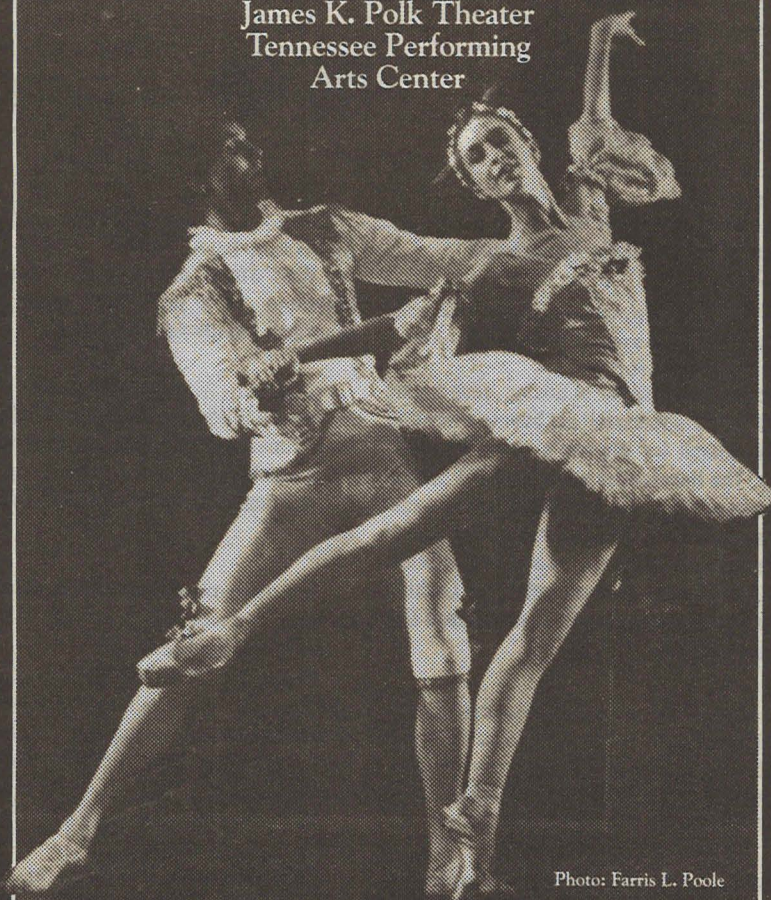


Photo: Farris L. Poole

Following each performance there will be a reception to meet Cinderella, Prince Charming and members of the Company. Evenings: Wine and Cheese. Matinee: Ice Cream Social. Tickets \$18 & \$15. Call Now! TicketMaster 741-2787

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**"Steppin' Out"**

starring

**MONICA MUNRO  
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DANA ALEXANDER  
DEJOURS SHOUNTE**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 30**

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**VICKI VINCENT,  
Miss Gay America 1988  
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# MARKET

## Announcements

- **YARD SALE** Saturday, April 22, 8am - 10 am. 1610A 19th Avenue South, Nashville. Mostly toys and female children's clothes, size infant - 7.
- **COMING** to Panama City Beach? Stay where you'll be comfortable. GRANDE GULF MOTEL, 6014 Thomas Dr. (904) 234-3951. Now featuring Pug's Pub. Open every day 4 - 2. Check the specials. Mention this ad.
- Don't miss The Boys in the Band, presented by Dare, 9pm, April 22, at Metropolitan Community Church, 131 15th Avenue North, Nashville. \$5.00 at the door benefits Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA).
- **PLEASE NOTICE** our new phone number: 615-327-DARE [327-3273]. Our mailing address is still the same: Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204-0422.
- Help fight proposed new homophobic changes in the law. Donate to, volunteer for, Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance. Advance, Box 24181, Nashville, TN 37202.
- Dare classifieds work! Those two vacuum cleaners got sucked right up.
- Catch our new look! Watch GCN/Nashville Tuesdays at 9pm, Saturdays at 8pm. On Nashville's Cable 35.
- **LONG HOURS. HARD WORK. NO PAY.** Dare is accepting applications from writers. Learn community-

oriented journalism, and be one of the best. Dare, Box 40422, Nashville, 37204 or phone 615-327-DARE.

## Homes

- Waverly-Belmont. Immaculate one-bdrm. No pets. Appliances, heat, air, water furn. \$250/mo. Deposit. 615 297-3865.

## Personals

- I'm kinda fonda Wanda on her Honda. I know, I know, but Suzuki didn't rhyme.
- Tomorrow will be 19 months of bliss. You've still got it. And I still want it. Your crumbcake.
- 30-year-old enlightened gay male seeks one who is courageously sensitive for emotional involvement. A radical soul living in a reactionary world, idealistic, willing to grow and experience joy who enjoys the unusual. A seeker of bliss. DARE DRAWER 36.

All ads run two consecutive weeks and cost \$10 for up to 100 characters, \$20 for up to 200 characters and so on.  
We reserve the right to edit ads, and to reject any ad. Sexually explicit or exploitative ads will not be accepted. No ad will be accepted without signature and advance payment in full. We assume no responsibility for advertisers' claims. Response drawers are available if you do not wish to use your own address. To respond to a response drawer ad, write to:  
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Box 40422  
Nashville, TN 37204-0422  
Ads received by noon Tuesdays will run the following Friday.  
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PHONE (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening) \_\_\_\_\_  
I certify that I am the person named above. **No ad will be accepted without signature.**  
Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want a response drawer number? ☐ Yes. Add \$5 per two-week period.  
Run this ad for ☐ 2 weeks ☐ 4 weeks ☐ 6 weeks ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ weeks  
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+ response drawer charge \$ 5.00  
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☐ **Yes! I'd like to subscribe to Dare for** ☐ 6 months (\$8) ☐ 1 year (\$16) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please print one character per box. A character is any letter, numeral, space or punctuation mark. We reserve the right to edit for length.

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**\$20**

# QUOTES

## Gotta have faith!

"Whether I'm gay or not is nobody's business but mine."  
— **Singer George Michael.**

"The idea of George Michael having a relationship with (a woman) is as likely as me having sex with a door."  
— **Singer Boy George.**

"...[E]mphasize abstinence from sexual relations outside of marriage..., basic moral values, as well as the obligations and consequences which arise from intimacy."  
— **Tennessee Senate bill, sponsored by John Ford, D-Memphis, that would require local school systems with high teen pregnancy rates to offer sex education classes stressing abstinence. The bill passed the Senate 32-0.**

"I will be only too happy to support the anti-abortionists, both in the U.S.A. and worldwide, as soon as I see evidence of the end to the following social problems:

"rape and incest, poverty and hunger, child abuse and neglect, ignorance about sexuality, ignorance about birth control, quality day care shortage, unwanted pregnancies, overpopulation, discrimination in the workplace against those with small children."

"As long as the above exist, abortions must remain a legal option to all who wish them."

— **Enid Smith, in a letter to the editor of the Nashville Tennessean.**

"Yes, but that's gays and lesbians. It's a lot easier to dump on gays and lesbians than on half a million women!"

— **An Amtrak ticketseller in Boston, responding to a lesbian pro-choice activist buying a ticket to the NOW March for Women's Lives/Women's Equality. The ticketseller said that NOW should have reserved trains for marchers, and the customer reminded him that Amtrak had canceled trains reserved to take lesbian and gay activists to the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, according to Boston-based Gay Community News.**

"My advice to restaurant owners? Get a popular gay waiter. I don't give a shit what you think about gays. There's money involved!"  
— **Al Lewis, who played Grandpa Munster on the 1960s television sitcom The Munsters.**

"AIDS is completely preventable. In the past eight years, there have been a total of 90,000 AIDS cases, mostly among homosexual men and intravenous drug users. About 300,000 cancer patients die every year. The media have whipped the public into a panic about AIDS, however, so money for a cancer cure goes to more glamorous, attention-getting AIDS research."

"This does not mean that AIDS research should be neglected. AIDS is a deadly, tragic disease, and its victims deserve our sympathy and compassion. They do not deserve the lion's share of research funds."

— **Jake Martin, of Franklin, in a letter to the editor of the Nashville Banner.**

"Most of my male friends are gay, and that seems perfectly natural to me. I mean, who wouldn't like cock?"  
— **Entertainer Valerie Perrine.**

"Relationships between women interest me enormously...I fell, too, that many people might go through life without having a physical caress of any sort — and that relationships of all kinds are necessary, and often relationships between two women can be of a very ennobling kind. It could be that if they didn't have that, they would have no one. I don't use the word lesbian anywhere in *Palomino*, but people do use it. I don't like labeling relationships. Women used to live together for economic reasons, and nobody suggested that it was a lesbian relationship. Two school mistresses would live together and share a small

house and a small car, and no one would look at them sideways."

— **Author Elizabeth Jolley in Publishers Weekly, on her new novel Palomino.**

"How many straight waiters does it take to change a light bulb? Both of them, honey!"

— **Helen Highwater, quoted in Gay Chicago magazine.**

"The monthly journal

particularly bashes gays..."

— **Wall Street Journal staff reporter Peter Waldman, in a story on Donald Wildmon's American Family Association.**

"God loves homosexuals too."  
— **Donald Wildmon, United Methodist minister from Tupelo, Mississippi, in response to questions about lesbian-and-gay-bashing material in his American Family Association's monthly journal.**

"Sex discrimination rears its ugly head in a teeming city where every resident is a woman — and men are banned!"

"When the 25,000 women of Sapphoborg refer to their town as the city of sisterly love, they're not kidding around. That's because each and every one of these gals is a man-hating lesbian!..."

"The town has even hosted several major feminist conventions..."

"We women know how to please our women spouses, better than some fat, beer-guzzling husband." [said Sapphoborg mayor Helga Gornblad]  
— **Martha Beasley in The Sun, a weekly supermarket tabloid.**

"The word 'née' is used to identify a woman's name before she got married. You might identify your transsexual alumni this way: Susie Jones (née Sam Jones)."

— **Jeffrey Zaslow, advice columnist for the Chicago Tribune, reprinted in Gay Chicago magazine.**