AND LIBERTY FOR ALL
By Michael Grantham

Pre-registration for "And Liberty For All", the 6th Annual Southeastern Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual College Conference begins today.

The conference will be hosted by Middle Tennessee State University Lambda Association Feb. 14-16, 1997. More than 500 gay and lesbian student leaders from across the southeast are expected to attend the leadership and inspirational conference.

The conference will bring powerful keynote speakers and workshop lecturers to MTSU's campus. David Mixner, Torie Osborn, Patricia Nell Warren, Lynn Shepard, and Paul Yandura will all serve as remarkable role models in keynote addresses.

A private fundraiser reception will allow patrons to meet the keynote speakers and workshop lecturers. The champagne reception will be held at the Garden Plaza Hotel in Murfreesboro on Saturday night, Feb. 15. A dinner will follow with David Mixner addressing both patrons and student participants at MTSU's James Union Building.

The private fundraiser reception is crucial in helping bring some very remarkable people from as far as LA and the White House to gay and lesbian student leaders in the southeast. Community support will also help foster a generation of active community members right here at home.

The announcement of pre-registration for this empowering conference coincided with a press statement released by the MTSU Administration regarding equal rights for campus gays and lesbians.

In the press release, MTSU President James Walker stated he does not feel the policy of non-discrimination should include "sexual orientation." In its place, President Walker will include a Statement of Community Standards of Civil Behavior in the Student Handbook.

Continued on page 3

HAWAII'S HISTORICAL DECISION
NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN TASK FORCE

In Hawaii last week, First Circuit Court Judge Kevin Chang handed down a historic decision in Baehr v. Miike, the case of three same-gender couples who sued for the right to marry. In his decision, Judge Chang rejected the claims made by the state that such marriages should remain illegal. Instead, he declared the right of same-gender couples to marry as protected by the Hawaii state constitution.

"This decision is one small but crucial step forward in a long march toward civil equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people," said Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "We seek the same rights and responsibilities of marriage that heterosexual people enjoy. Marriage is an important personal choice and a basic human right. Whether gay people decide to get married or not, it should be our choice," added Lobel.

At a trial in September the state Attorney General's office marshaled expert witnesses to demonstrate the state had a compelling reason to prohibit same-gender marriage. The state particularly focused on the need of children, claiming two-parent couples of a man and a woman provided the best environment in which to raise children. "The Attorney General in Hawaii had three years to pull together the evidence to make his case, and the judge wasn't convinced," said Lobel. "It proves what our community has said all along: there are no intelligent reasons why same-gender couples should be denied the right to marry."

The state of Hawaii is expected to appeal a decision by a state judge who ruled that same-sex marriages are legal. The ruling makes Hawaii the first state in America to declare that gay and lesbian couples are entitled to the same privileges as heterosexual married couples. Judge Kevin Chang found that Hawaii's state government had not established a "compelling state interest" to justify a ban on same-sex marriages. The state of Hawaii case triggered legislative moves to bar recognition of gay marriages. President Clinton has signed into law legislation prohibiting federal agencies from giving those in same-sex marriages the same benefits as those received by heterosexual couples. The decision by the court will most likely be appealed and stayed until the higher court makes its final judgment.
Actress Elizabeth Taylor received an award for courage Monday from the group she helped found, the American Foundation for AIDS Research, known as AFAR.

She told a special luncheon that people were under the illusion that she first became involved with AIDS because of the death of her friend, actor Rock Hudson.

But she said she encountered difficulties in 1984 when she organized her own AIDS benefit in Los Angeles, a time when no one wanted to speak publicly about the disease.

"I have never known rejection like that before in my life," she said. "Then Rock became sick and that really hit the town and people did start to get involved."

"I had no idea then I would be taking the first step on such a long and heartbreaking road," she said. "It isn't over yet. We need more than hope. We need you."

She was presented with a bracelet of hearts from the president of the Carter jewelry firm, Simon Critchell, who quipped that Taylor had been "a long-time friend" of the company.

The day's events at the United Nations, following World AIDS Day on Sunday, were scheduled to culminate with speeches in the General Assembly hall by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and Tom Ammiano, who were listed on the invitation as Honorary Committee Members.

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DECEMBER 9, 1996 XENOGENY PAGE 3

XENOGENY NEWS BYTES

MTSU UPDATE
(Continued from page 1)

The statement encourages a "dis­
cain for bigotry and hatred expressed in
any form or medium and directed toward
identifiable groups or individuals in the
community.

The Uniform Equality Com­
mittee formed under MTSU Lambda
Association to seek ways of ensuring equal
protections with regard to sexual ori­
tation, viewed the statement as a posi­
tive first step toward adopting a policy
of equity for campus gays and lesbians.

The UEC hopes "Liberty
For All" will encourage student leaders
to take steps to increase activism and aware­
ess efforts on campuses across the
southeast.

Last year’s conference, held at
the University of Alabama, drew considerable
controversy when Alabama’s State
Attorney General Jeff Sessions moved to
ban the conference. It finally took a fed­
eral court in Mobile to rule the state’s law
preventing campus gay and lesbian groups,
from meeting on campuses as unconstitu­
tional before the conference could go on.

Sending one of the largest stu­
dent delegations, MTSU Lambda
Association moved to secure the confer­
ence for MTSU 1997. After becoming
involved with several national confer­
ences, the current co-chairs are excited
about bringng home the energized spirit
of an empowering era for gay and lesbian
Americans.

For more information on this
conference, visit www.mtsu.edu/mlamb­
da/selgb.html. If you are interested in
attending the private fundraiser reception
or the conference itself, please call 615-
780-2293.

JENNY JONES VERDICT

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) — The coun­
ty probation department recommended
that a man serve at least 25 years in prison
for killing a gay admirer who revealed his
rape during a taping of the "Jenny Jones
Show."

Jonathan Schmitz, 26, was convicted
of second-degree murder in the March
1995 shooting of Scott Amedure. Judge
Francis X. O’Brien, who was to sentence
Schmitz this afternoon, is not bound by
the probation department recommenda­
tion.

Defense attorney James Burdick
told the probation department report
was inaccurate and unfair. Burdick, who sug­
gested a sentence of four years or more for
Schmitz, told The Oakland Press he would
ask for a delay in the sentencing to seek a
hearing on the report.

Twenty-five years’ imprison­
ment for a man who is mentally ill, who
was betrayed, who was lied to, who was
sentenced, who was pursued relentlessly
and who snapped — where is the justice
in that?" the newspaper quoted from a
report Burdick filed in court opposing to
the sentencing recommendation.

Second-degree murder is punishable
by any term up to life in prison.

Sentencing guidelines are based on a
point system taking into account the
crime and a defendant’s criminal record.

Prosecutor Jerry Gleson wants a 25-
year term.

PREACHER TACKLES
THE BIBLE

Cambridge, Mass.—Peter J. Gomes is a
preacher who defies stereotypes. He’s an
ordained Baptist minister who presides over
Harvard University’s nondenominational
Memorial Church. And he’s a black, gay
Republican.

He’s also Harvard’s Plummer Professor
of Christian Morals. But he knows that title
might not sit well with the Jerry Falwells
of the world.

“I’m sure I don’t fit your idea of Christian
morals, which is why I think you’re quite
wrong,” he said. “They have patented the
notion of Christian morals, but it is not theirs to coin or mint.”

There, he said, “I found it was possible to
be both intelligent and thoughtful on the
one hand and pious and believing on the
other—that mind and heart thing.”

Gomes rejects the anti-gay Biblical
interpretations of the so-called religious
right. And in his new book, “The Good
Books: Reading the Bible With Mind and
Heart,” published this month by William
Morrow, he argues the Bible’s words sup­
port him.

Throughout history, he says, some
Christians have manipulated the Bible to
 oppress certain groups: Jews; women, blacks,
gays and lesbians.

And it’s those Christians who claim to
be most devout who traditionally have been
the biggest oppressors, he says. He cites the
white Southern Baptists who perpetuated slavery,
for example, and the German Nazis who ex­
cuted millions of Jews.

But, “Just because white people had
abused Scripture didn’t mean Scripture was
abusive,” he said.

“I wanted black people, women, gays and
lesbians among others, to see and to hear
that the Bible was both for them and with them,”
he wrote.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Editor,

I want to express my thanks to Mr.
Barry Noland and his generous promotion of
my name in his article (Perfect Fit) in the
November 25th edition. And I concur with
many of his statements and answer questions
that he queried.

Yes, Vanity thy name is queer and so
is she. I’m really not a deadly sin, but I’ve
been known to be a sinfully good time. Of
course his reference to deity was correct,
being the goddess that I am, my body isn’t a
temple, but God knows I’m as big as a
church! My favorite question that he posed
was “So tell me, how did Vanity get such a
bad rep? Well, I must reply honestly, it was
the good old fashion way my dear, I earned
it!”

Barry, preach on about balance, bal­
ance, because I alone know how
hard it is to balance 280lbs. on four inch heels!

Keep up the good work Barry, thanks
for the plug, and keep your toe nails clipped.

Miss Vanity Valvoline

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TEN TO TWO

BY DJ RON SLOMOWICZ

If Junior Calls..

With "If Madonna Calls" blowing up the club charts and crossing over onto radio, Junior Vasquez is definitely experiencing a highpoint in his career.

His remixes of Qumba Zoo's "Child Inside", For Real's "Like I Do", Cher's "One by One", Amber's "This Is Your Night", and Whitney Houston's "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" have been some of the club highlights from the past few months. However, his remix of the Cher song "Paradise is Here" has put a spike in his crest. Without a doubt, "Paradise is Here" is one of the weakest songs from Cher's album. It would take a miracle to make this song work, and Junior just does not pull it off. Granted, he does make this turgid track listenable, but it is obvious that this was a rushed job without much thought invested.

Junior's work also takes the backseat on new releases by the Spice Girls and Kristine W. The Spice Girls made their mark with their massive international smash (except of course for the United States) "Wannabe". "You'll Be There" starts with the same flava, a smoothed out r&b jam on the pop tip. While the "Wannabe" remixes were on the euro tip, the "You'll Be There" goes in the house direction. Junior Vasquez does a good job, adding epic breaks and a dark trancey tribal feel. Junior is eclipsed by Dancin' Danny's mix. Danny's mix builds around a "Love Me" sample that sounds like it is taken from the Cardigans' "Lovefool". He adds a new level of energy while keeping the dark club feel intact.

Kristine W achieves her third consecutive number 1 hit album with "Land of the Living". While the import single was "Lovefool", the title track of her debut album "Land of the Living". While the import single was amazing, containing mixes by Dekkard and the American version adds a mix by Junior Vasquez. Each mix takes the epic anthem into a different direction. The D-Mob mix is disposable, perhaps one of the worst remixes I have heard this year. Rollo takes the track with a disco feel for great results. Deep Dish pays respect to Kristine's lounge roots by starting with Kristine belting out the lounge standard "Don't Get Around Much Anymore". The mix slams and builds, using Kristine's vocals as an instrument. Though her vocals are not emphasized in the mix, they are present in full effect. The Lisa Marie Experience Mix sounds like euro done at a house speed, tres unique. The Junior mix builds and builds, into what. I have no idea. The other mixes just overwhelm the Junior mix, making it seem like an also ran in a marathon of champions.

In other news...

Simply Red lead off both the "Set It Off" soundtrack and their own greatest hits album with "Angel", their collaboration with the Prodigies. The hip hop mixes are really sweet and should make this song a hit. Mousse T goes in three different directions, soul, funk and house. Let me just say that the house mix is interesting...to say the least. To begin with, there is an extra beat that throws off the whole beat count. To fit the house tempo, Micks vocals are stretched. These two elements make the house mix a totally different trip.

Did you see Toni Braxton perform at the Billboard Awards? She started off with the ballad version of "Unbreak My Heart" which exploded into the dance mix. A wide array of dancers joined her as she ripped off her dress to expose one of the best toned bodies in the music industry. I was impressed to see two guys dancing together, doing the same close dance move. Their heterosexually coupled counterparts were doing, that the gay couple was in the foreground in front of Toni herself, shows that Toni is very accepting of the gay community. Please support this gay friendly dance artist!

If you ever have any questions about dance music, feel free to e-mail me at dj.ron@nashville.com.
ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY
Music City Rollers Bowling League: 12:30 p.m. 227-3543
Fall/Winter Volunteer Volleyball League: Shelby Park 1:30 p.m. 297-0008
Stonewall Mission Church: 6:30 p.m. at 703 Berry Road 269-3480
Metropolitan Community Church: 7:00 p.m. 1808 Woodmont Blvd. 262-0922
Rejoice and Be Glad: For Catholic’s meets monthly for mass & potluck, call 646-5163

MONDAY
NOW: National Organization for Women, 4th Monday 7:00 p.m. at the Nashville Peace & Justice Center located at 1016 18th Ave. South, call 269-7141 for details.
Positive Attitude: 6-8pm at the Connection support for HIV+ individuals & friends
Excellent Verbs: lesbigaytrans prose-poetry-factual songwriting group, 7pm. 650-0961

TUESDAY
MTSU Lambda Association: 6:30 p.m. Fall & Winter 780-2293
Southern Country Dance: At The Chute 7:00 p.m. 2535 Franklin Rd. 297-0008
MAGNET: The Married and Gay Network: 1st Tuesday 6:30 p.m. At the Center for Lesbian & Gay Network located at 703 Berry Rd 297-0008.
NWA: Nashville Women’s Alliance 3rd & 4th Tuesday 7:00p.m. At the Center 703 Berry Road 297-0008. Monthly NWA Newsletter.
MENTORS: Sacred Space for Men. Discussion & Support Group. 7-9pm at the Center. Call 269-4342 for details.
Integrity: Lesbigay Episcopalians. 4th Tues. Eucharist potluck & Service, 6:30pm 297-7779.

WEDNESDAY
Co-Dependents: Anonymous 7:00 p.m. 703 Berry Rd 297-0008.
Free to Be {AA}: 6:30 p.m. 419 Woodland St.
One in Teen: 6:30 p.m. 703 Berry Rd 297-0008
Women’s Discussion Group: 7:00 pm at the Center 703 Berry Road. Call 297-0008

THURSDAY
Music City Rollers II: Bowling League 6:30 p.m. Donelson Plaza Lanes 227-3543
The Lesbian & Gay Coalition for Justice: The Board meet 7pm the 1st Thurs. & the general membership meets 7pm the 3rd Thurs. At St. Ann’s Episcopal Church, 5th & Woodland. Info 298-5425
INTERACT: Gay men’s discussion group 7:00-8:30 P.M. on 2nd & 4th Thursday 703 Berry Road 297-0008
Vanderbilt Lambda Association: meets weekly at 7pm @ the Cumberland House-Westside Row on the Vanderbilt Campus. Call 322-0376 for details.
Alternatives (AA): 7:30 p.m. 2007 Acklen Ave.

FRIDAY
Overeater’s Anonymous: 5:00 p.m. 703 Berry Rd 297-0008
Program Study Group (AA): 7:00 p.m. 2007 Acklen Ave.

SATURDAY
Nashville ’97 Lesbian & Gay Pride Committee: Meets the 1st & 3rd Saturday at 12:30pm at the Center 703 Berry Rd. Everyone is welcome! Call 226-6193 for details.
Tennessee Vals: Support/social group for CD’s, TG’s, & significant others meets 2nd Sat. 664-6883. P.O. Box 92335 Nashville, Tn. 37209. See Web Page http://www.transgender.org/tgltvals/index.html.

OTHER
Clarksville CARES: 1-615-503-4063
Human Rights Campaign: 729-20007
The Center : 297-0008
Positive Voice: 383-9285
Tennesseans for Equality: 386-9077

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Sister Sage’s Astrological Reading

Aries March 21st - April 20th
You reach for the highest possible achievements this week. You don’t want what’s easy, you want something to mean something of meaning in your life. You want to be regarded by those around you as worthy of respect and admiration. It is important for you to remember that high ideals and easy wins rarely go hand in hand. Don’t settle for less than what you really want in love or in life. Aim High.

Taurus April 21st - May 20th
This week you think about deep meanings for your life journey. You search for important truths and concepts by which you can formulate your life. This is an excellent time to delve more deeply into astrology because there you can find many of the answers you are seeking. It is a good time to consider new year resolutions.

Gemini May 21st - June 20th
If you have recently broken up then it is possible that you are still in turmoil about splitting up your possessions. You can let go of the memories with out letting them have everything you both have purchased over the relationship. It will be hard to replace them later and you may never see them again. Do an inventory and choose carefully. It may make life easier later on down the road.

Cancer June 21st - July 22nd
You focus on your ideal partnership this week. You have high standards and you want to decide exactly what that means as far as you are concerned. You try to decide how much of yourself to give in a relationship. You deal with complex issues regarding a prospective mate. You will receive good luck hunting for a partner or you might decide to connect with someone who needs rescuing. Think twice!!!

Leo July 23rd - August 22nd
You seek meaningful work opportunities this week. People around you either want to help you or they are a drain on your energies. Ego concerns are always important to you. You may decide that you accomplish a lot more by putting your ego aside. Self respect and ego are not the same thing. Your health is another issue. You desire to take better care of yourself and a good check-up may be in order.

Virgo August 23rd - September 22nd
You think about the meaning of love this week. If you are not involved already, you seek true love and are willing to meet new people, even if they’re not immediately your type. Just being available for social interaction is the key. Time spent around children in your life is rewarding. Your own inner child needs attention and fun. You may embark on some new hobby to be creative and express yourself.

Libra September 23rd - October 22nd
You think about changes in your living situation this week. This might mean moving in with someone or having them move in with you. Two can live as cheaply as one on a budget. You may be considering a move to a more spacious place, but if you are planning to buy, be sure to have a professional examine any property you look at to make sure it’s is good shape. Consider whose name is on the title/lease.

Scorpio October 23rd - November 22nd
A serious talk with someone from your past helps to put things into perspective. You deal with the emotions you shared and what that has to do with the meaning of your life. If there was a misunderstanding you can take steps to set it right and that will make you feel better and stop brooding about it. It is very hard for you to let go, but sometimes it is necessary. Dig below the surface and the truth is there.

Sagittarius November 23rd - December 21st
You deal with financial issues this week. You are in a period of increased earnings, but you also have a tendency to squander extra cash. This means you will remain in balance. This is a good time to concentrate on your feelings about prosperity. We all achieve at the level we believe we deserve. Not just in money but in other areas of wealth as well. Envision the amount you want, then think about why!

Capricorn December 22nd - January 19th
You think about your value system this week. People come into your life now to teach you lessons about give and take. Some will do nice things for you and you will be grateful, but you also learn the value of putting someone else first. It really can be more rewarding to give than to receive. Basically the universe works on a system of give and take and there should always be enough for all of us.

Aquarius January 20th - February 18th
You deal with plans for the future and issues from your past this week. Our minds are like huge reservoirs where every experience is stored. We can access all of the past, but sometimes it takes great effort. You float through time perhaps when you sleep and definitely while daydreaming. Bits and pieces of your life emerge into your consciousness and you try to make sense of your life.

Pisces February 19th - March 20th
You connect with a new set of friends who are idealistic and inspiring this week. You enjoy being part of a group and you are more willing to join in a team effort for a worthwhile charity. You are also focused on long term goals for the future. You think about what you have accomplished so far and what there is still left to do. In fact, you probably already writing your list of resolutions for 1997.

Talk to Sister Sage at 615-391-5286 or SisterSage@aol.com
Appreciate yourself for the small steps you accomplish you are proud of. Share important person in your life? Holiday Blues and with you as the most have taken, not just the big ones.

Now, how can you enter 1997 without the personal insights you have gained and high expectations and unachievable goals professional accomplishment. Don't let too ing, quite possibly another year may be to go. Don't wait to be invited to holiday season fall into the same old, dull holiday season. Don't Eat, Drink and be Miserable. Holiqays are traditionally a time to go. Don't wait to be invited to holiday party--create your own holiday event. Invite other people who are waiting to be asked to special events. Ask them to help plan it, get everyone involved and have a good time at your own event.

Don't Eat, Drink and be Miserable. Holidays are traditionally a time when people stuff themselves with food and drink they normally would not indulge in. The more alcohol, sugar and heavy food they ingest, the more strain that is put on the body and the greater the chances they will feel fatigued, depressed and overall Holiday Blue.

Next that a new year is approaching, quite possibly another year may be passing without any significant personal or professional accomplishment. Don't let too high expectations and unachievable goals get you down. Set aside some time now to evaluate your growth during the past year. Write down the things you have learned, personal insights you have gained and accomplishments you are proud of. Share this list with a close and trusted friend. Appreciate yourself for the small steps you have taken, not just the big ones.

Above all, know that the most important relationship you have this year is the love you have for yourself. So, think now, how can you enter 1997 without the Holiday Blues and with you as the most important person in your life?

WON ROUND ONE IN HAWAII
BY BILL TURNER

You've probably heard that the trial court in Hawaii has ruled against the state's ban on same-sex marriages. Don't book your flight just yet, though. The same judge also delayed the implementation of his own ruling to allow the state time to appeal the decision to the Hawaii Supreme Court. That process should take at least a year.

In the meantime, don't forget that various right-wing groups are working to amend the Hawaii state constitution in order to add an explicit prohibition of same-sex marriages. If that effort succeeds, the state Supreme Court's decision will be irrelevant.

And, of course, even after the issue gets settled in Hawaii, we still have both the state antimariage law prohibiting recognition of same-sex unions in Tennessee, even if legally granted in another state, and the "Defense" of Marriage Act that allows the federal government to deny benefits to legally married same-sex couples. In other words, various courts around the nation will have to take up this issue over the next several years.

Does that mean we have nothing to celebrate? No. We may not yet have the option of marrying another legally, but we do have yet another document in which a judge has carefully reviewed the standard right-wing stereotypes about the dangers of openly lesbian and gay persons and declared the logic on which those stereotypes rest bung.

Courtrooms are usually the closest thing we have to a neutral public space in which to discuss issues rationally and passionately. They clearly are not perfect. Judges sometimes intrude their personal opinions and prejudices into the legal process. They sometimes have motives other than the pursuit of justice. Lawyers do not always present the strongest possible position for their side, whether through incompetence or duplicity.

But the point remains that the purpose of a courtroom is to provide a space in which impartial observers can weigh arguments and evidence on each side of an issue and arrive at the best possible conclusion.

WORLD AIDS DAY RETROSPECT

World Aids Day was marked by prayer, protests and proclamations all over the world.

In Washington, the AIDS awareness group ACT UP staged a vigil across the street from the White House, urging more government funding for AIDS research. Across the country, in Portland, Archbishop Francis George celebrated a special Mass for the peoples with the disease.

In Rome, taxi drivers distributed AIDS leaflets. Across Thailand, gas stations offered free condoms. In South Africa, Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu went on TV to urge people to practice safe sex.

World AIDS Day was marked with renewed vigor around the world Sunday after a U.N. agency reported an accelerating death toll, with nearly a quarter of the 6.4 million AIDS deaths to date occurring in the past year.

In 1996, 3.1 million people were infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, bringing the total number of people with HIV or AIDS to 22.6 million, UNAIDS said.

In Asia, the site of an AIDS explosion, the war on the disease got graphic. Activists posted photos of an emaciated AIDS victim in Beijing's central Zhongshan Park near the ancient imperial palace, along with posters that read, "The risks of careless sex and lifestyle hygiene."

Health officials have warned that more than 1 million Chinese - 10 times the estimated present number - could be infected with HIV by 2000 if preventive measures are not taken.

In Thailand, which has an active sex industry, 420 gas stations distributed 3 million condoms to customers with the warning, "Be careful of AIDS when feeling naughty."

The health ministry and state-owned Petroleum Authority of Thailand sponsored the program. An estimated 800,000 of Thailand's 60 million people have the HIV virus, and 50,000 more have died of AIDS.

In the Philippine capital of Manila, about 250 government officials, activists and at least four HIV patients joined in the 1 1/4-mile "First National AIDS Walk."

In Taipei, an AIDS awareness group displayed memorial quilt patches to honor victims of the disease.

Photo exhibitions carried the message in India, which volunteer organizations say has Asia's worst AIDS epidemic, with an estimated 1 million or more HIV cases. Charity organizations sponsored marches in Bombay.

More than 400 people gathered in Tokyo for the lighting of a 20-foot tree bearing 12,000 red ribbons, symbol of the fight against AIDS.

Europe warned against complacency.

In central Paris, several hundred AIDS activists marched with signs reading, "AIDS: The Epidemic Isn't Over" and "Zero Equals the Number of AIDS Survivors."
INVASION OF RAINBOWS

By Paula Gherippa, AXGRND@aol.com

It didn’t take long to pack, it took 21 hours to drive, and about 15 minutes to unload everything. Mom was thrilled to see me, it had been a year since my last visit. She loves the dogs, even if they do bark at the neighbors, and I looked good too. Although, I had my doubts as to the truth behind that statement, she had to have eye surgery this week, to replace the lens in her “terrible” eye, leaving only her “bad” eye to see with! That will be corrected next year, then she will really be able to see me, and not just a blur running around. I thought I had settled in for the evening, when she suddenly got a hangovering for a glass of wine.

“Walk down to Crowly’s and get a bottle,” she said, stuffing a $20 in my hand.

Walk! Me? It made sense really, I had a prime parking spot right out in front of the house, a treasure that would most certainly be gone if I drove those 5 blocks, so I bundled up in my wool coat and headed down the street. I walked quickly, before the chill could set in.

Every telephone pole on the entire street has a light on it, so the street was as bright as day (every pole except the one next to my driveway), and that’s why my uncle keeps losing his driver’s side mirror) and as I walked along, I noticed all the changes. The man who lived across the street was gone, and in his place were 2 women, (“nice girls, one drives a Jeep like yours” I was later told by a relative.) Up at the bend in the street where my aunt lives there was a new resident, someone who was flying a rainbow flag on the porch. A bit closer to my destination, there was yet another rainbow flag, this one was being used as a curtain, and I noticed one on the car in front of that house as well.

I began to smile, all alone, by myself in the streetlight, there I was, smiling my fool head off! I never should have left the neighborhood! We could have blocked off the entire street, all the way up to TUFFS, and had a pink triangle ball, I believe!

I arrived back at Mom’s with (no lie) a bottle of Beringer’s and a 1.5 litre bottle of Woodbridge. cheap, but what the menu called for. We opened the small bottle first, then the bigger bottle, when my brother got home, Mom and I were “hammered” as he put it, and we all watched a “real fight” on pay per view.

My mom kept telling us it wasn’t real, but she couldn’t see it! She thought she was watching wrestling! I tried to tell her they weren’t wearing make-up, that they were bleeding...she would have no part of that. She went to bed.

I agreed to a trip to Maine with my brother, to keep him company while he went to pick up his kids for the holiday, and we chatted about the neighborhood. His complaint was that, no matter how nice he is to the girls next door, or the ones across the street, none of them give him the time of day. I realized the next day, when I went outside to play with my dogs, the 2 cars in the neighbor’s driveway had rainbow flags on them, as did the across the street neighbor’s Jeep (she even came out on her porch with her morning coffee, watched me playing with the dogs, and started a conversation with me) and she was joined by another woman, momentarily, who then hopped into a Honda in their driveway, and a rainbow flag alongside a pink triangle backed into the street! So, that’s why they didn’t give him the time of day! He did make mention to me that he heard me talking to someone in the yard, and I told him, I met the neighbors, he looked a bit confused. I let go, it’s funnier this way!

The old stomping grounds have certainly taken on a new look, as the unsuspecting are slowly being invaded. I have a sneaking suspicion I never should have given up my room, that morning coffee, I hate to sound like I was living in the past, but that is all it does.

HATE AIDS JEFFREY, NOT LIFE!

By DEL DORR

I really liked the movie “Jeffrey”. Somewhere I found it easy to relate with this man as he struggled to harmonize his being gay and his fear of AIDS.

Jeffrey’s initial reaction to this conflict is a decision to stop having sex. In an attempt to appease his bottled up sexual urges, he goes to work out—in a gym. While there, he meets Steve, a handsome young man, and is attracted to him. To his disappointment, he quickly learns Steve is high on himself from anything to do with being gay.

Jeffrey prepares to leave New York, he is called to the hospital where his friend Darius has been admitted. Before he can get there, Darius dies. In a wonderful scene (possible in the movies) Darius appears to Jeffrey in a tunnel of white light reminiscent of the many near death experiences that we all read about.

Two great pearls of advice are given to him by Darius at that time. The first, “Hate AIDS Jeffrey, not life!” The second “Remember this, it’s still our party?”

I was reminded of the reality if AIDS again as the World AIDS Day was observed on December 1st. Locally Christ Episcopal Church hosted a program of music and readings remembering those who have died of AIDS. They have lost to this dreaded disease. As there always is in such a service, an opportunity was given to call out the names of those within your circle of friends who have died of AIDS. I get upset as my list of lost friends continues to grow a teach service. I can relate to Jeffrey and his struggle because it is one that I must face as well. As I watch the movie, I can laugh at the humor and foolishness of his efforts to deal with this part of his life. But I wonder when we look at our lives, if they really differ so very much from Jeffrey’s.

I imagine we all at one time or an other have made a vow of celibacy, to really take firm control of our lives, and in the process gone to the extreme of nearly retreating from life itself. Yet life is to be lived. One of the great paradoxes of the Christian faith is the teaching of Christ that “we are in this world, but not of this world.”

Each one of us will go in any aspect of our life.

An illustration of this concept might be television. There are those who avoid the idiot box completely and see no value in it. There are those who watch it constantly, who then hopped into a Honda in their driveway, and a rainbow flag alongside a pink triangle backed into the street! So, that’s why they didn’t give him the time of day! He did make mention to me that he heard me talking to someone in the yard, and I told him, I met the neighbors, he looked a bit confused. I let go, it’s funnier this way!

The old stomping grounds have certainly taken on a new look, as the unsuspecting are slowly being invaded. I have a sneaking suspicion I never should have given up my room, that morning coffee, I hate to sound like I was living in the past, but that is all it does.

I hate to sound like I see sex in the same way that I view a television set. Yet we may end up with the same extremes of being completely controlled by our sexual desire or by trying to totally deny this aspect of our lives. As Jeffrey, we may be trying to get away to our own little mid-western town and to hide from life. My younger brother used to run and hide his head under the bedspread thinking no one else could see him. He was like the ostrich with his head in the sand. It may be one way to fool ourselves but that is all it does.

In his play, Paul Rudnick finally has Jeffrey come to the conclusion:

“I’m a gay man.
I live in the city.
I’m not an innocent bystander.
Not anymore.”

In my own life, I know I have to wrestle with the matter of sexuality, just as you have. There are choices and decisions to be made. AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases are not to be faced in making these choices. The extremes: no sex at all or unrestricted sex. Call what you will, compromise, rationalization or whatever, there must be a more satisfactory alternative. Let me throw out an other term as I close and say safe sex. Darius observed, “It’s still our party!” It is our life to live or to be simply observed. I think I want to become a participant as Jeffrey finally concluded to be, don’t you?

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Through March 2nd

Women of Africa: Guardians of Culture.

At Scarritt-Bennet Center.

Wednesday, December 11th

LESS STRESS IN 5 MINUTES!
The Margaret Cunningham Women’s Center on the Vanderbilt Campus will sponsor this stress reduction program from 11:30am - 12:30pm.

Call (615) 322-4843 for details!

Tuesday, December 10th


Meets at the First Christian Church at 309 Madison Street, Shelbyville.

For details, call Sandy Craig at (615) 684-8481.

Thursday, December 12th

INTERACT- GAY TRAVEL-

(discussion) Men’s Social/Discussion Group.

Meets the second and fourth Thursday at the Center,

703 Berry Road. Call (615) 254-3806.

Friday, December 13th

HANUKKAH ENDS

Friday-Sunday, Dec. 13th-15th:

PERSON’S LIVID WITH AIDS

Starring the Eggplant Faerie Players.

Sponsored by Query at the Darkhorse Theater located at 4610 Charlotte Ave. in Nashville. 8pm, $10.

Call (615) 297-7113 or email pkrurland@edge.net.

Saturday, December 14th

NWA Women’s Craft Fair

At the University Center, 802 Woodmont Blvd. 10am -5pm.

Tuesday, December 16th


Meets at the First Christian Church at 309 Madison Street, Shelbyville.

For details, call Sandy Craig at (615) 684-8481.

Thursday, December 18th

INTERACT- Christmas Party/New Year’s Party!

Men’s Social/Discussion Group.

Meets Thursday at the Center,

703 Berry Road. Call (615) 254-3806.

Saturday, December 21st

WINTER SOLSTICE

Saturday, December 21st

Room In The Inn Christmas at the Center 703 Berry Road.

Wrapped gifts of warm clothing, sweaters, sweat shirts, socks, underwear, knit caps and other items will be handed out at 8pm. For details call Jennifer at (615) 391-5286.

Tuesday, December 24th

CHRISTMAS EVE!

Wednesday, December 25th

CHRISTMAS DAY!

Thursday, December 26th

KWANZA BEGINS

Saturday, December 21st

WINTER SOLSTICE

Saturday, December 21st

Room In The Inn Christmas at the Center 703 Berry Road.

Wrapped gifts of warm clothing, sweaters, sweat shirts, socks, underwear, knit caps and other items will be handed out at 8pm. For details call Jennifer at (615) 391-5286.

Tuesday, December 24th

CHRISTMAS EVE!

Wednesday, December 25th

CHRISTMAS DAY!

Thursday, December 26th

KWANZA BEGINS

Saturday, December 21st

WINTER SOLSTICE

Saturday, December 21st

Room In The Inn Christmas at the Center 703 Berry Road.

Wrapped gifts of warm clothing, sweaters, sweat shirts, socks, underwear, knit caps and other items will be handed out at 8pm. For details call Jennifer at (615) 391-5286.
The MCSA Softball League Proudly Presents:

The First Annual

HOLIDAY GOLD PARTY

“A 24 Carat Event”

Saturday, December 14th, 1996

At The Chute Complex

Food, Fun, Festivities & Entertainment! Prizes Given Away During the Night
Come Early, Stay Late!

7pm-11pm “The 24 Carat Contest” 7pm-11pm

Come dressed in your favorite Holiday attire! (be creative, be festive, have fun!) You could just win $100 just for being there!

Admission to “The Gold Party” is $3.00

Hosted By R. Scott Russell & Raquel Savage

Special Holiday Shooters For $1.00

“Drink Specials in the “Party Room” until 9pm

“Bring a red ribbon in support and remembrance to be placed on the “AIDS Tree”. Ribbons will also be available at the event. A Portion of the Proceeds will be donated to the PWA Fund.

Special Guest: Nationally Known Impersonator

Dane “Dolly” Chase.

Featuring Many Live & “Memorex” Entertainers From Our Community
As we learn about Vanyel plight, we are treated to what many will be a replay of their own coming-out thoughts and late night prayers. Vanyel is shown to us as a scared adolescent who realized long ago that he is different. Now he is realizing where those feelings stem from. The playful and very out Tyllendel slowly breaks his shell and opens Vanyel up to the life bond they are destined to share. Lended, even nicknames Vanyel “Ashke,” short for the Shin’in word for gay.

Mercedes Lackey tells a tale as spellbinding as the magically aided bards in her stories. Her characters call up sympathy, hope and intense feelings of longing in the reader. Vanyel will stick in your mind and your heart.

In Magic’s Promise, we again follow the adventures of Vanyel, an older and much jaded Vanyel. He has become a thing of legend. The bards sing of him as Vanyel Demonsbane, the Shadowstalker. He has just spent a year in the wilds of Valdemar, doing the job of five Heralds.

This is the second book in the trilogy and the one that really delves into Vanyel’s abilities as a mage. The mystical language is written in a believable and comfortable style. The reader should feel no need to make a leap of faith to believe he is able to do all that he claims.

The only problem with this book is that at the beginning, Vanyel seems to have gone back into the closet. He feels that others fear him because he is gay. Thankfully Yfandes, his companion, is the voice of reason that makes him see they are afraid of his enormous magical talents and not his feelings toward other men.

The introduction of Tashir, a newly discovered Herald, adds a different perspective to the series. Vanyel’s struggles to protect his kingdom, lead the Heralds and overcome his own self-doubt carry this book through an exciting and engaging mystical mystery.

In the third book, Magic’s Price, we are introduced to a new and more confident Vanyel. He is now the last Herald Mage. His confidence has grown throughout his hardships and he has come to terms with the losses in his life.

This character is incredible. The culmination of Vanyel’s life lessons are evident, he is proud of his sexuality and of his power. A truly magnificent character that could stand alongside any other great sci-fi hero.

Mercedes Lackey has given us a great read with the Last Herald Mage trilogy. Superbly crafted characters, engaging plotlines and powerful emotions will have you hooked on not only the adventures of Vanyel but on Ms. Lackey’s writing as well. Thankfully she has written a multitude of other titles with just as much spirit and imagination.
The day after Thanksgiving kicks off the Christmas frenzy. I always said I would not shop on this day. This year was different. I was up at 6am and at the mall early. It wasn't so bad. I was done shopping by 10:30am and went home for a nap.

My shopping was limited because I no longer use plastic to fund my shopping. I use a debit card that deducts directly from my checking account. It's like buying with cash. If I don't have it, then I can't spend it.

In the past, I tried not to use credit cards, but as Christmas would get nearer, I would get emotional and go charge whatever I needed. In January, when the bills came in, I would be angry at myself for spending so much money. It's worse when you think of the interest you have to pay.

I cut up all my credit cards. (there was a grieving process). I closed my accounts and adjusted my mindset. Today, I am on my plan to be debt free. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have no debt?

RAM Research of Frederick, Md. says that the typical U.S. family owns 14 credit cards, with an average balance of $5,800. By taking two steps—negotiating for a lower interest rate and paying an extra $25 each month rather than just the minimum payment due—cardholders can save themselves a lot of money.

Start today by calling your credit card issuer and asking for a lower rate. Just tell them that you have another card with a 6.9% interest rate and you were planning on transferring your current balance. They will probably agree to lower your current interest rate for a special time frame. If they don't, transfer the balance to the lower rate card you have.

For a list of low rate cards, send $4 to Bankcard Holders of America, 524 Branch Dr. Salem VA. 24153.

At this point, you need to begin the snowball process. Take the lowest balance you have and add an extra $10-$25, whatever you can afford, each month. Continue to pay the minimum on the rest of your credit cards. If you do this process until your cards are paid off, you will be saving yourself thousands of dollars in interest.

Remember, once you start your plan you have to stop using your cards. Cut them up. Call and have all your accounts closed. That way you won't be tempted.

Start today, believe you can get out of debt. Put a plan together and commit to it. Take control of your finances and your life. By changing a few things today, you can make tomorrow brighter.

If you need help in putting a plan together or have questions, please call 782-0715.
But... But...

Butts...

Try Our NEW BARE BOTTOM
HAPPY HOUR! 4pm to 8pm Sun-Fri!

2-4-1 DRAFTS  2-4-1 COCKTAILS
$1.50 LONGNECKS!
$2.00 Big Mouth (16 ounce)....

Bud, Bud Lite, Miller Lite & Ice House

Coming Soon.... Mr. Y's new attraction...5 kinds of Draft Beers!

ALWAYS OPEN TO THE CRACK OF DAWN!

To Our Valued Customer: Ynonah’s & Ramrod will be closed on Tuesday, December 10th at 4pm for our annual employee Christmas Party! We will re-open at Midnight-Come join us afterwards!

Ynonah’s & Ramrod Men’s Bar is happy to announce they have installed a state of the art video tape surveillance security system inside and outside to prevent theft and vehicle damage! 24 hours a day 7 days a week! Quad TV Monitor inside!

Come Meet
Mr & Mrs Claws

Guess Who?
Come find out!

on Friday, December 20th!

Friday The 13th
BLACKOUT PARTY
10pm-6am...
it just may
be your lucky nite!

1700 4th Ave S. (615) 251-0980

Ynonah’s Saloon

RAMROD
Mr. Y’s New
“MEN ONLY BAR”
Check out our new CENTER
PIECE on Sundays @ 5:30pm.
Come hungry....Eat and get filled!

Donate to our PWA BASKET OF CHEER!

Come see our new fireplace!
We’ll warm your buns!

But...

Try Our NEW BARE BOTTOM HAPPY HOUR! 4pm to 8pm Sun-Fri!

2-4-1 DRAFTS  2-4-1 COCKTAILS
$1.50 LONGNECKS!
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Come Meet
Mr & Mrs Claws

Guess Who?
Come find out!

on Friday, December 20th!

1700 4th Ave S. (615) 251-0980

Ynonah’s Saloon
*People Needed*

New study starting at
The AIDS Vaccine Evaluation Unit at Vanderbilt
We need men and women of all races and ethnic groups who meet the following criteria:
* Gay or Straight Men & Women practicing low risk sexual behavior
And
* Gay Males who practice high risk sexual behavior
A modest honorarium is provided. If you are interested in helping to find a vaccine to prevent HIV, please call Mary at (615) 343-2437.

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Make a great, unique gift!
Send name, birthdate, birthplace, and time of birth, along with $20.00 (Money Order Only)
To: Paula P.O. Box 358
Ashland City, Tn. 37015

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**This Week at the Connection**

**Tuesday Nights:**
Country Western Dancing
Starts at 7pm!

**Wednesday Nights:**
Robin Dupree & Cast
Showtime at 11:30pm

**Thursday Nights:**
Male Dancers at Midnight!

**Friday & Saturday**
Country Western Dancing in Our Lounge!

**High Energy Dance**
Cast of La Boy Le Femme in Our Theater!

'Tis The Christmas Spirit at the Connection
Closed Christmas Eve - Tuesday, December 24th
Re-open Christmas Day
Wednesday, December 25th

Watch for Our "Absolutely Fabulous" New Years Eve Celebration!

Julians Eatery Open Wednesday thru Sunday 8pm to Midnight!