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# Dare

free!

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 38

THE GAY AND LESBIAN NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 9-16, 1988

## Anti-porn Group May Meet Free Speech Battle

By JEFF ELLIS  
Managing Editor

While members of the Nashville Coalition Against Pornography (NCAP) organize to rid the city of "illegal pornography," there appears to be little progress made by opponents to counteract those efforts.

However, according to Hedy Weinberg, executive director for the Tennessee chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a heated battle may be shaping up for what could be a test of first amendment rights.

NCAP, an organization formed by a coalition of Christian fundamentalist-oriented groups, will attempt to guarantee enforcement of state and local laws against selling obscene materials.

Members last week cited statistics which show an alarming increase in the number of sex-related crimes perpetrated in Metropolitan Davidson County as evidence of the detrimental effect pornography has on the community.

Local organizers are looking to a similar group's success in Chattanooga for inspiration in their Music City fight. The Chattanooga group was successful in bringing about the closing of adult bookstores and video arcades in that southeastern Tennessee city. According to sources there, the group then turned its attentions to closing the city's gay bars.

The local group, patterned after the National Coalition Against Pornography, has as its goal the elimination of "illegal pornographic materials" from the shelves of local adult emporiums, said Diana Maas, NCAP spokesperson.

Those efforts, according to Weinberg, could be in violation of the right of free speech as

guaranteed by the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

"I'm concerned that they are wanting to achieve the same goals in Nashville that the Chattanooga group was successful in achieving there," Weinberg said. "The ACLU believes the first amendment protects all written or filmed materials."

Weinberg pointed out, however, that as of yet the ACLU has not officially considered the issue.

"I want to wait until I have had the opportunity to get some of the materials NCAP is distributing before I form an opinion," she said.

According to Weinberg, the ACLU does not support the exploitation of any individuals and is supportive of laws which penalize those guilty of such exploitation.

Weinberg said, however, that the real question being considered is not one of exploitation, but rather one of freedom of speech.

"As offensive as I personally may find some pornographic materials to be, it is not my place, or anyone else's, to tell people what they may or may not see or read," Weinberg said.

Although Weinberg said the ACLU has not officially been approached about NCAP's crusade, she said she had spoken with several individuals, including members of the clergy, who are fearful of the group's aims.

NCAP representative Maas, however, rejected the notion that the group's efforts are a threat to the freedom of speech guarantees.

"Many people think that by going after illegal pornography that we are against freedom  
continued on page 3



Tennessee Repertory Theatre's production of *Christmas Memories* is at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center's Polk Theater this weekend. Nan Gurley (left) and Barry Scott sing in the original-book musical. Jeff Ellis knows whether or not you should go see it, page 7. —PHOTO RHEA RIPPEY

## Gore: Federal Government's AIDS Inaction "Appalling"

By JEFF ELLIS  
Managing Editor

Calling the federal government's lack of action to combat the AIDS epidemic an "appalling indictment," Tennessee Senator Albert Gore Jr., Saturday vowed to work toward reversing that trend.

Gore made the comments Saturday morning during an open meeting conducted for his constituents at Legislative Plaza.

During the 90-minute meeting, Gore addressed a number of issues ranging from education funding to trimming the federal deficit.

The largely partisan crowd erupted with applause on several occasions when Gore was thanked by individuals for his recent run for the White House.

The Tennessee senator was one of seven Democrats vying for his party's presidential nomination. Although Gore gained a sizable number of delegates in last March's Super Tuesday primary, he withdrew from the race prior to the Democratic Party's national convention in Atlanta.

Responding to a question about the federal  
continued on page 3

## Safer Sex in Memphis

By STUART BIVIN  
Editor

*Hot, Horny and Healthy*, a series of safer-sex workshops, will be presented this weekend in Memphis, according to Irwin Rothenberg, one of Black and White Men Together-Memphis' representatives to the National Association of BWMT.

"This is done as a public service—an outreach. We invite the public to Sunday's workshop especially," Rothenberg said. "Membership in BWMT is not required to attend."

Phill Wilson, health trainer consultant for NTFAP and co-chair of BWMT-Los Angeles, will conduct the workshops designed to "teach gay men how to enjoy a healthy, vigorous, creative sex life while taking the AIDS epidemic into account and playing safely," according to the group's announcement.

BWMT is a multi-racial social and political organization dedicated to fighting racism, sexism and homophobia.

The Sunday session, at Apartment, 343 Madison in Memphis, is 6:00-9:00 p.m., and is free, although seating is limited. Friday and Saturday sessions will focus on training safer-sex educators. The workshops will be presented by the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention (NTFAP) of the National Association of Black and White Men Together in cooperation with BWMT-Memphis. For more information, phone (901) 726-1461. •

## Rollaway 18-Wheeler Damage Closes Nashville Gay Bar

By JEFF ELLIS  
Managing Editor

Bob's Crazy Cowboy II was among the businesses temporarily closed this week as a runaway tractor-trailer truck wreaked havoc on several businesses along Franklin Road in Nashville early Saturday morning.

A truck from the Motor Convoy fleet, transporting eight new automobiles to Beaman Lincoln-Mercury Motor Company in the 2300 block of Franklin Road, apparently slipped out of gear and rolled backward, crossing the normally busy street and crashing into the row of businesses.

"Thankfully no one was here, because none of the businesses had opened yet," said Bob Simrell, owner of the Crazy Cowboy. "Luckily no one was hurt."

Much of the damage to the Crazy Cowboy building was done when a station wagon, parked in one of the spaces outside the club, was hit by the truck and slammed into the building's façade.

The truck's driver had parked the rig and gone into Dennison's Restaurant while waiting for the car dealership to open.

Damage estimates were unavailable, but Simrell said the Crazy Cowboy was among the businesses sustaining the least damage. Although temporarily closed, Simrell said he hoped to re-open the nightclub within the next week, possibly by press time.

"It's still a little early to tell, but I hope we will be able to open this weekend," Simrell said.

The incident occurred in the early hours of last Saturday, around 7:30 a.m., Simrell said. •

## INSIDE

Sherre Dryden  
goes to the Beach,  
*Lesbian Paris*,  
page 4.

Chris Freeman  
muses about a  
philosopher's look  
at homosexuality,  
page 6.



Sunday, December 18  
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Week Before  
Christmas

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## Dates

### Memphis

#### Mondays

**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** (ACQA)  
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 901 327-4145.  
**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

**Nashville CARES**  
AIDS/ARC Support Group, 6:30pm. HIV Education Support Group, 6pm. Family Support Group, 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

**Vanderbilt Lambda Association**  
Meeting for gay and lesbian Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff and alumni.  
Vanderbilt Divinity School, Room G 23. 5:30pm. Info 615 385-4283.  
**AI-Anon**  
Open meeting, MCC, 6:30pm.  
**Nashville CARES**  
HIV Education Support Groups, 7pm. Info 615 385-1510.  
**Seber Sisters** (Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous)  
Closed meeting, MCC, 8pm.

#### Wednesdays

**Sex Addicts Anonymous**  
Closed meeting for gay men and lesbians. MCC, 5:30pm.  
**Nashville CARES**  
AIDS/ARC Couples Support Group, 5:30pm. AIDS/ARC Support Group, 6:30pm.  
HIV Support Group, 7pm. Info 615 385-1510.  
**MTSU Lambda Association**  
Meeting for lesbian and gay Middle Tennessee State University students, faculty, staff, and alumni. 7pm. Info 615 890-3787.

#### Thursdays

**Nashville CARES**  
HIV Support Group, 6:30pm. Visualization group, 6:30pm. Info 615 385-1510.  
**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

**Sexaholics Anonymous**  
Closed meeting, MCC, 5pm.  
**Gay Parents Support Group**  
Meeting, MCC, 1st Friday only, 7pm. Info 615 292-0817 or 615 320-0288.  
**Alcoholics Anonymous Program Study Group**  
Meeting, Belmont United Methodist, 7:30 pm.

#### Saturdays

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

#### Sundays

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

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

## SPECIAL Events

### Friday-Sunday, December 9-11

**Safer Sex Workshops** *Hot, Horny and Healthy.*  
Sponsored by Black and White Men Together,  
Memphis. Featuring Phill Wilson. Some sessions  
limited attendance. Free. Info 901 726-1461.

### Saturday, December 10

**Gay Women's Social Group** Ornament-making  
party, Memphis. \$2 donation. Info 901 458-1973.  
**Concert** *Encounter International*, inspirational music.  
Metropolitan Community Church, 131 15th Av North,  
Nashville. 8:30pm (follows Mortgage Meal). Info 615  
320-0288.



Encounter International

### Sunday, December 11

**Feminist Book Circle** Meeting. Guest speaker  
author Merrill Mushroom, on her new book *Daughters  
of Khaton*. First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1808  
Woodmont Blvd, Nashville. 5-7pm. Free. Info 615  
385-4283.

**Benefit Show** Benefits Human Response Council.  
WKRB in Memphis, 1528 Madison, Memphis. Info 901  
278-9321.

### Wednesday, December 14

**Special Support Group** *Getting Through the  
Holidays.* Nashville CARES. 7:15pm. Info 615 385-  
1510.

### Thursday, December 15

**Film** *Caravaggio* Vanderbilt Lambda Association.  
220 Garland Hall, Vanderbilt, Nashville. 7pm. \$1  
donation.

### Saturday, December 17

**Christmas Party** Black and White Men Together,  
Memphis. 8pm. Cash bar. Info 901 452-5894.

### Monday, December 19

**Christmas Dinner and Party** Potluck. Sponsored  
by Memphis Gay Coalition. GDI on the River, 287  
South Front St, Memphis. 7:30pm. Cash bar. Info 901  
324-GAYS (324-4297).

**Discussion Group** *Religion and Being Gay.* Black  
and White Men Together, Memphis. 7:30pm. Free. Info  
901 452-5894.

### Wednesday, December 21

**Special Support Group** *Getting Through the  
Holidays.* Nashville CARES. 7:15pm. Info 615 385-  
1510.

### Saturday, December 24

**Christmas Eve** *Word and Song.* Special holiday  
service. MCC, 131 15th Av North, Nashville. 8:30pm,  
following Mortgage Meal. Free. Info 615 320-0288.

### Sunday, December 25

**CHRISTMAS DAY**



# ...Gore on AIDS

continued from page 1

government's lack of support for adequate funding to fight AIDS, Gore said he would provide leadership in the U. S. Senate to ensure proper funding.

"It's an appalling indictment that we've seen this epidemic go on so long without enough action on the part of the government," Gore said.

He said he would support efforts in the Senate to allocate funds for education and research into the disease.

"I would support public health measures to

stop the spread of this disease," Gore said. "I hope the Bush administration will take an interest in this issue and provide the necessary leadership to effectively combat it."

Recent report cards issued by the Washington-based National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) indicate that Gore has a better than average record for votes on issues relevant to the lesbian and gay community.

Gore was given a B for voting the NGLTF position some 88% of the time. His score placed him among the Senate's more favorable lawmakers, according to NGLTF reports. •

# ...anti-porn group

continued from page 1

of speech. That's not true. There are laws on the books which make pornography illegal. We see ourselves as an organization to encourage law enforcement authorities to follow the law," Maas said.

According to Maas, the group has not de-

cidated on a firm plan of action although she did not rule out actions directed at local adult bookstores.

Owners and/or managers of local adult bookstores and film arcades who were asked to comment on the situation refused to respond. •

## Briefs from STAFF REPORTS

### And Now, Jim and Tommy, er, Tammy

**Defrocked PTL minister Jim Bakker** was involved in a sexual relationship with the minister who claimed responsibility for Bakker's liaison with Jessica Hahn, according to a story in the January issue of *Penthouse* magazine.

John Wesley Fletcher, who claims to have had sex with Bakker on at least three occasions, says he was "Jim Bakker's male prostitute" in the story.

Fletcher said he told a federal grand jury meeting in Charlotte, N.C., of his sexual involvement with Bakker. The grand jury is investigating charges that Bakker, his wife Tammy Faye and PTL aide David Taggart misappropriated funds contributed to the television evangelism network.

Fletcher, who was defrocked by the Assemblies of God church in 1981 amid charges of homosexuality and drinking, in the *Penthouse* account paints a picture of a leering Jim Bakker lusting after young male camera operators on the PTL set.

Fletcher reports that he reluctantly accepted Bakker's sexual advances. Bakker earlier testified that he has never been involved in any homosexual relationships with anyone.

In the article, Fletcher accepts the blame for the downfall of the PTL empire which he claims was precipitated by his introducing Hahn, a former church secretary, to Bakker.

Hahn has charged that Bakker and Fletcher raped her in a Florida hotel room. Fletcher claims in the *Penthouse* interview that Hahn willingly had sex with the two men.

Fletcher is the second man who claims to have had sex with Bakker. Last September, former PTL official Jay Babcock said he told the grand jury of a sexual encounter with Bakker. •

### Commission to Hear South Carolinians

**The Palmetto Gay/Lesbian Association (PGLA)** has announced that its members will address the Greenville County, South Carolina, Human Relations Commission in January.

The presentation marks the first appearance before a South Carolina government body by a lesbian and gay rights group. PGLA is a statewide organization for lesbian and gay concerns in South Carolina.

Robin Williams, the group's president, will make the presentation to the commission, according to *Our Times*, the group's publication. •

### D.C. Council Refuses to Forbid Discrimination

**The Washington, D.C., city council** had rejected requests by local lesbian and gay activists to add non-discrimination amendment to a bill repealing the city's ban on HIV testing by insurance companies and another bill authorizing city-backed low-interest revenue bonds for Georgetown University.

"They wimped out on us," said Chris Bates, chair of the city's Black and White Men Together chapter, after the Council passed both bills on first reading by unanimous voice votes. Activists were unable to find council members to introduce either of the amendments to the bills.

Bates said that council members who are usually supportive would not work for the passage of the amendments because they were afraid of further Congressional interference, according to the *Washington Blade*.

Congress, which has veto power over the District's Council, exercised that power recently, nullifying the District's law forbidding sexual-orientation discrimination by private institutions receiving District funding or backing for bond issues. Georgetown University, a Roman Catholic college, which has often received bond support from the District, had refused to recognize or allow funding for a gay and lesbian student group.

After a years-long court battle, the University was forced to recognize the group. Activists attribute the Congressional action to strong lobbying by the Catholic church. •

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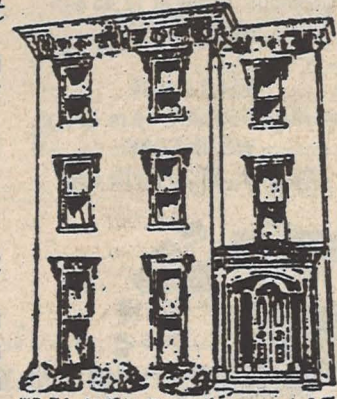
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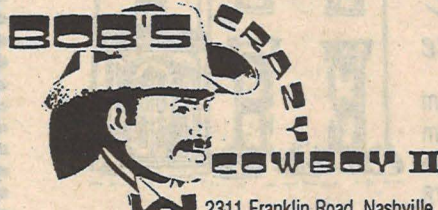
  
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# LESBIAN GAY PARIS

Sylvia  
&  
Shakespeare



**Sylvia Beach** as a  
 volunteer farm worker in  
 Touraine, August 1917, the  
 same year she met Adrienne  
 Monnier. —PHOTO PRINCETON  
 UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



By **SHERRE DRYDEN**  
*Book Editor*

Like Natalie Barney's salon, Sylvia Beach's bookshop and library Shakespeare & Company was, for many who went to Paris in the Twenties, the physical embodiment of the new, free life they sought. It was both a meeting place and a home, a safe center from which to venture into the streets and cafés and bars.

Unlike Natalie's, you didn't have to know someone or be invited — you tossed your bags onto the bed at the cheap little Left Bank hotel friends had recommended and headed right for Shakespeare & Company. Sylvia, and perhaps her companion Adrienne Monnier, would be there to give a welcoming smile, hear about your aspirations, introduce you to whichever brilliant new writers were browsing among the books and magazines.

Sylvia was one of three daughters of Eleanor Orbison, a painter and musician, and Sylvester Beach. Sylvester, for whom Sylvia changed her name from Nancy at age 15, was pastor to a Presbyterian congregation that included Woodrow Wilson and Grover Cleveland.

Eleanor felt stifled by the life expected of a pastor's wife and travelled with Sylvia and her sisters Holly and Eleanor (later called Cyprian), falling in love with Paris. When Sylvia returned to Europe permanently, mother Eleanor supported her, financially as well as spiritually.

Adrienne's bookshop and lending library, Maison des Amis de Livres, at 7 Rue de l'Odéon, had become a gathering place for those interested in avant-garde French literature and arts. Of Adrienne, American poet William Carlos Williams said: "To conserve and to enrich the literary life of her time was her unflinching drive."

In March, 1917, Sylvia read that a new literary review, Paul Fort's *Vers et Prose*, could be found at Adrienne's. Drawn "irresistibly to the spot where such important things in my life were to happen," she said, she went into the shop.

"At a table sat a young woman. As I hesitated at the door, she got up quickly and opened it, and, drawing me into the shop, greeted me with

much warmth. I was disguised in a Spanish cloak and hat, but Adrienne knew at once that I was American.

"A high wind suddenly blew my Spanish hat off my head and into the middle of the street and away it went. Adrienne rushed after it, going very fast for a person in such a long skirt. She pounced on it just as it was about to be run over, and, after brushing it off carefully, handed it to me."

As Adrienne and Sylvia sat down at the table and talked about books, their long friendship began. Sylvia became a member of the library, attending readings and spending "many hours in the little gray bookshop of Adrienne Monnier." She saw more and more of the proprietor, too, eventually moving to Adrienne's apart-



**Sylvia Beach** looks over early reviews of *Ulysses* with author J.



# PARIS: Sylvia Beach and Shakespeare & Co.



Adrienne Monnier in the back room of her bookshop, Maison des Amis des Livres, at about the time she met Sylvia Beach. —PHOTO PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

ment in 1921.

In 1919 Adrienne helped Sylvia open her own shop. Shakespeare & Company (Sylvia said the name came to her in bed one night) was the first bookshop in Paris to stock English and American publications. In the beginning her customers were French – Adrienne's friends André Gide, Paul Valery, Jules Romains.

The Americans came soon after, scores of them, and Shakespeare & Company became a sanctuary for American and English writers who travelled to Paris.

For many, Sylvia is best known as the publisher of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

She met Joyce (only the fearless American writer Djuna Barnes called him "Jim") at a party three days after he moved to Paris. He was in

the shop the next day, July 11, 1920, to ask if Sylvia knew of an apartment or students he could tutor in languages. He told her about the glaucoma that made him nearly blind and how copies of Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap's Little Review containing sections of *Ulysses* had been confiscated by U.S. postal authorities as obscene.

During the days and months to come Joyce visited Shakespeare & Company many times, to borrow books, cash checks and keep Sylvia informed about the progress of *Ulysses*. After Margaret and Harriet were convicted of selling obscene material to a minor, Joyce feared the book would never be published. Sylvia suggested, and Joyce agreed, that Shakespeare & Company publish *Ulysses*.

Sylvia worked long hours collecting subscriptions, arranging for typists, writing Joyce's checks and answering his correspondence, sending his telegrams, promoting the book. She continued to act in this capacity for Joyce for ten years, with little appreciation from Joyce or his associates.

Editor Samuel Roth referred to Sylvia as "that vicious virago, Joyce's secretary." Joyce, according to Sylvia's biographer Noel Riley Fitch, wrote disparagingly of Sylvia's "more intelligent partner, their lesbian relationship...and Sylvia's migraines."

Malcolm Cowley recalled: "Joyce accepted favors and demanded services as if he were a sanctified cause. It was, he seemed to be saying, a privilege to devote one's life to the cause, and those who paid his debts for him were sure to be rewarded in heaven." Although Sylvia publicly appeared to agree with Joyce to the extent of sacrificing her life for *Ulysses*, she had her own interpretation of things: "My only love was really Adrienne."

Adrienne, who wrote openly about her attraction to women, described Sylvia as "young, friendly, fresh, heroic...electric." Her poem to Sylvia, published in her book *La Figure*, begins "I salute you, my Sister born beyond the seas! Behold my star has found your own." •



James Joyce, 1922. —PHOTO PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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# Dare

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Publisher & Editor  
Stuart Blvin

Managing Editor  
Jeff Ellis  
Book Editor  
Sherre Dryden  
Staff Writers  
Deborah Burks  
Joe Marohl  
Jaan Sturgis  
Contributing Writers  
Carole Cunningham  
Patrick Hills

Advertising Sales Manager  
Ann Taylor  
(615) 352-5823

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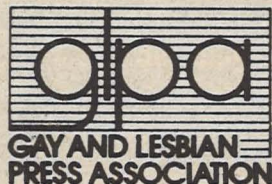
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## Soapbox

### Accommodation and the Success of Oppression

By CAROLE CUNNINGHAM  
Contributing Writer

I remember hearing my grandmother years ago describe in glowing terms the black woman who cleaned her house each week. My grandmother treated this woman with respect and warmth and paid her a decent wage. I daresay my grandmother would have done just about anything for that woman and would have been the first to tell you so.

Yet my grandmother had a lot of strong opinions about "niggers": "niggers" were shiftless, lazy, prone to theft, incest, rape and unbridled procreation. But my grandmother's general feelings about blacks, her hatred of Jesse Jackson, her profound mistrust of Martin Luther King, were never extended to her treatment of her black housekeeper: Sarah, in fact, was a "good nigger."

The fact that my grandmother would make this distinction between "her" housekeeper and all other "niggers" points to a facet of human nature not lost on the S.S. officers planning the "final solution" at Wannasee. Officers were warned that while many Germans would agree that Jews were destroying the economy of Germany, draining off precious resources, and were a generally filthy, greedy, and evil people bent on the destruction of the Aryan race, those same Germans would resist the attempt to include certain Jews in the "final solution": yes, they would say, the Jews are evil people and must be destroyed — but not this Jew Edelman, he's a good Jew, I'll vouch for him.

The Nazis understood that people tend to draw distinctions between their personal interactions and their political agendas, making room in their lives and hearts for individuals who, when grouped together, they would send in cattle cars to Auschwitz. Understanding this behavior and exploiting it made the "final solution" possible — because to remain true to the idea that Jews must be de-

stroyed, reason demanded that *all* Jews be included.

I'm not ready to say that my grandmother would have sent Jews to the gas chambers or blacks into slavery — but I see in her actions and attitudes a *potential* slave owner, a *budding* Nazi.

So when Steven W. Way in a recent letter to the editor asks that lesbians and gays rate the Reagan record on gay rights on the basis of the Reagans' willingness to mourn rock Hudson's death from AIDS or on the basis of their general compassion and concern for others, I'm struck by how this reasoning smacks of the reasoning employed at the Wannasee Conference and in my grandmother's kitchen. One of the ironies of evil, as Hannah Arendt points out, is its banality: that good Germans, *decent* Germans, who loved their children, were kind to their neighbors, were merciful to animals, were at the same time capable of sending 6 million Jews to the gas chambers. Germans were willing to consent to atrocities in public policy they would never have allowed in their personal interactions.

History has not judged the Germans who condoned the holocaust on the basis of their relationships with individuals, but on the policies they accepted that were directed at Jews as a people. The Reagan administration has done nothing in its policy-making to further the interests of gays and lesbians; it has done nothing in its policies to effectively further the interests of gays and lesbians; it has done nothing in its policies to effectively and swiftly deal with the AIDS crisis in all its dimensions.

During the eight years Reagan has held office, gay rights activists were labeled fanatics for their dramatic demonstrations about the administration's lack of leadership in the AIDS crisis. When the President had the opportunity to accept his own AIDS Commission's recommendation that legislation be enacted to protect people with AIDS from discrimination, the

President ignored the Commission's plea.

He may have given Ron, Jr., a nice hug that night or sent flowers to Rock's funeral, but the dearth of funding to battle AIDS, the refusal to recognize and fight the violence and discrimination often a daily reality of gay and lesbian life, do not speak well of the President's compassion for gay people or for his commitment to gay rights. But those facts do speak — indicting Reagan's record as loudly as my grandmother's or that "innocent" executioner's at Auschwitz who gave alms to the poor on his way home from the gas chambers.

Gays and lesbians overjoyed by the election results November 8, were not overjoyed because their rights and the rights of all gays and lesbians would be promoted and legislatively protected by a sympathetic administration. If they were overjoyed, like Mr. Way, it was because they thought their tax return might be a little fatter, welfare a little leaner, defense a little bigger.

If Mr. Way cares about his own rights as a gay man and the rights of other gays and lesbians, he will do more than invite gays to his home, and he will encourage the president he helped elect to do much more as well.

Mr. Way's support of Mr. Reagan, Mr. Bush, and the conservative agenda might make him in darker times (and the light is growing dim) a "good faggot," spared a little longer than others the consequences of the next backlash against gays — allowed to keep his job, his house, his promotions a little longer than the gay activist down the hall who was fired.

But as even those Jews who found favor in the eyes of some Germans discovered, when laws do not protect you, when government does not defend you, it's only a matter of time before someone's hatred will destroy you.

Wake up and smell the coffee, Mr. Way — and send next year's tax break to T-GALA (the Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Alliance).

## Pages

### Ruse's *Homosexuality*: A Not Terribly Philosophical Inquiry

*Homosexuality: A Philosophical Inquiry*. Michael Ruse. London: Blackwell, 1988. 299pp.

By CHRIS FREEMAN  
Special to Dare

British philosopher Michael Ruse has written a "scholarly" text — a self-proclaimed "philosophical inquiry" — into our favorite subject: homosexuality. This study is, at best, an uneven one. In spite of an ostensibly philosophical stance, Ruse devotes the bulk of his attention to scientific (biological) and psychological/sociological aspects of gayness.

Unfortunately, this majority of Ruse's text is where the philosopher is at his weakest. Ruse is, quite clearly, neither psychologist nor biologist.

Ruse devotes three chapters to Freudian theories of gayness. He does not present a particularly readable or revolutionary re-visit of Freud's stance on homosexuality. Ruse's most significant conclusion (*vis-à-vis* Freud) is that homosexuality is not an illness. Ruse next examines biological/genetic

"causes" of homosexuality. Again, his conclusions fail to be, so to speak, conclusive. He addresses such topics as hormonal causes and the sociobiological view of homosexuality. Ruse discounts the latter and muddles the former. He does defend hormonal studies, however, against charges of being homophobic/motivated. Ruse finds that "hormonal studies and explanations of human homosexuality have no necessary or inevitable biases against homosexuality or homosexuals" (p. 129).

When he finally, two-thirds of the way through his inquiry, turns to the philosophical aspects of his case, the writing is livelier and more lucid. Ruse traces a tri-partite history of gayness, from Classical Greek to Judeo-Christian to modern ethical philosophical views. Strongest in support of gayness, as we might expect, are the British utilitarians, especially Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.

Ruse effectively defends charges that homosexuality is an illness or a sickness. In this

section, he spends some time discussing AIDS, but his treatment of the topic is problematic: he ignores all but gay male-related AIDS issues. This is a shortsightedness that a conscientious philosopher should not be guilty of.

Ruse's final chapter, "Homosexuals and Society," reiterates the study's myopia and misdirection. He rejects any illegality of homosexual behavior strongly enough, but in a discussion of the age of consent for heterosexual activity, and Ruse has no problem with that. But, sixteen (and even eighteen!) are problematic for Ruse in terms of age of consent for gays. Ruse's tone implies some irrational and unfounded fear of gays' desire (compulsion?) to "corrupt" young people. Such intonations, especially in this kind of study, are reprehensible.

Ruse's *Homosexuality* is misdirected. He concentrates on areas where he is weakest; he de-emphasizes his philosophical grounding. There is a definite strength within the text, one  
**continued on next page**



# Curtains

## TRT's Christmas Memories

By **JEFF ELLIS**  
Managing Editor

Tennessee Repertory Theatre scores yet another hit with its seasonal offering, *Christmas Memories*, a musical mélange of holiday fare that is sure to please even the most miserly Scrooge in our midst.

The show's original music — lyrics by Mac Pirkle and music by Stan Tucker — is artfully blended with all the holiday songs you love to hear during the Christmas season in a superb production that features some of the best voices this side of Broadway.

The show's concept — once again credit goes to the peripatetic, ubiquitous Mac Pirkle, who doubles as the narrator and a member of the ensemble — is simple enough: a group of friends gather for a holiday party, reminiscing and cavorting in words and music.

The original music by Pirkle and Tucker is so suited to the occasion that it's difficult to tell it from the standards you've heard for years. The show's musical version of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" could well become a holiday standard with its rather eclectic mix of musical styles.

*Christmas Memories* provides a showcase for some major Nashville talents who may become major talents everywhere if their performances in this show are any indication.

Foremost among those talents is Ginger Newman, whose glorious soprano fills the Polk Theatre as perhaps none has filled it before. She is nothing short of startling; that she is here in Nashville is indeed a coup for the city. Newman, who won the Metropolitan Opera regional auditions last year, lifts her voice to the upper recesses of the Polk, chilling and thrilling her audience with her control and sheer artistry. (Casting prediction for TRT's upcoming production of *Evita*: if Ginger Newman's not Eva Peron, we'll eat Catherine Darnell's hat.)

Nan Gurley, whose beautiful voice opens the evening's entertainment, is top-notch. Her stage presence and comedic flair are impeccable, she commands your attention and rarely lets it go. Her *a capella* performance of "Huron Indian Carol" is haunting and sweet, a skillful blend of emotion and control.

Jackie Welch's soulful alto soars on "Sweet Little Jesus Boy" and "Go Tell it On the Mountain." But, unfortunately, her voice is underutilized in this production. Fortunately for us, however, when she sings, she really sings.

Among the men, Ricky Russell is a stand-out. His rocking, maybe even rolling, voice breathes new life into some old songs. Russell is able to infuse even the tired old chestnut into something new and exciting. Noteworthy is "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," in



which he sings lead. It's by far the best version of the song we've heard, thanks to the male members of the ensemble who, in the best Temptations style, make the song their own.

"Go Tell it On the Mountain," which Barry Scott sings (with Welch's able assistance) is soul stirring. His is one voice we'll certainly want to hear again.

All of Joseph R. Mahowald's numbers are good, as can be expected from this well-trained performer, but seemed to lack some of the energy evident in other numbers. His duet with Newman on "Unexpected Song", however, is truly a highlight of the evening.

Actually, everyone in the show is wonderful. It's absolutely astounding that we're lucky enough to have these people here. They fill the Polk Theatre with a sound that truly evokes Christmas memories for us all.

But the show does have some shortcomings. While the action of the first act and the first part of the second act is presented within the party premise, suddenly the party ends — too soon for me, actually — and the cast goes offstage.

Rather awkwardly, the set is changed and the cast returns, dressed in new costumes (the women in cocktail dresses; the men in dinner jackets) to perform a "Christmas Festival Medley" and to lead the audience in a sing-along.

If the reason for this was to give the performers a chance to wear pretty clothes, it didn't work. The dresses are dowdy and the men look rather uncomfortable in dinner jackets.

Instead, it seems writer Pirkle just ran out of steam. It would have been much easier, and less jarring to the theatre-goer who hasn't studied his program closely, to present the medley and the sing-along within the book's premise.

But that's really a nit-picky sort of thing in view of the production's overall excellence. Special credit must be given to scenic designers Brian J. Laczko and Sam Craig for the wonderful set — a tastefully-decorated townhouse that's swathed in Christmas finery — and to Laczko's lighting which artfully frames the action.

The only other complaint is the show's brief one-weekend run. We may, however, find solace in the fact that it could well become a tradition. If so, *Christmas Memories* may continue to make Christmas memories for years to come. •

## ...Ruse's Homosexuality

continued from previous page

of knowledge and understanding, but it is overwhelmed by the abundance of non-philosophical material.

And Ruse marginalizes lesbianism off the page—he can only nod in deference to gay women when it is utterly unavoidable. The title should have specified male homosexuality, or the text should have incorporated lesbi-

anism.

As it is, Ruse's inquiry is incomplete and unsatisfying. Lesbian readers will undoubtedly feel neglected, and many of Ruse's deductions regarding women and sexuality wax sexist. And, as a gay male reader, I feel confused by the text, finding no conclusions and few enlightening inferences to be drawn by Ruse. •

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