

S O U T H E R N

VOICE

TAKING PRIDE IN OUR CULTURE

APRIL 28 - MAY 4 / 1994

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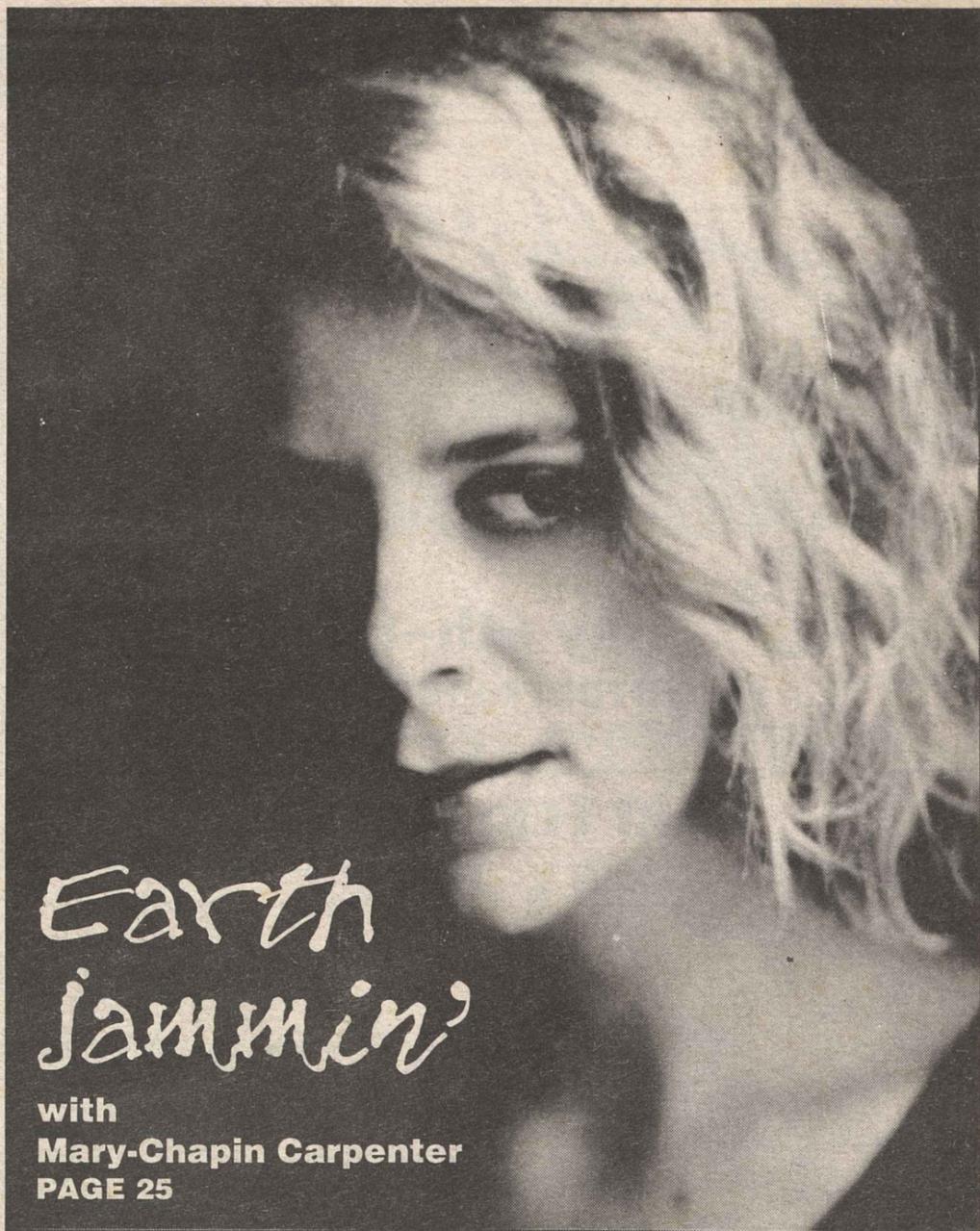
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VOLUME 7/NUMBER 10 PLEASE RECYCLE 75c WHERE SOLD



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Journey Through Gay South Africa

Atlantan Mark du Pont, who has spent part of the last two years doing HIV education in South Africa, discovered a country where attitudes are profoundly changing about gays, lesbians, sex and HIV.

by MARK du PONT

In thinking of the perfect vacation spot these days, one may hit upon several exotic or unusual destinations. However, when I expressed my plans last year and this year to board 22 hours worth of flights to spend a month in Cape Town, South Africa, I received both accolades and therapist recommendations.

Today, the Republic of South Africa is torn by racial strife, a new government, its first elections in which all citizens can vote—and a long-ignored AIDS epidemic.

My first trip was simply to get away from everything familiar. I was greeted at the airport by my longtime buddy, Robin, and quickly taken into a city that looks just like Atlanta, Birmingham, Chicago or New York. Lunch was at the Hard Rock Cafe (actually the first one to open outside of New York long ago), and the party I attended that night was chock full of the same gay men I had left behind in the United States.

Each man speaking of last night's date, tonight's date, tomorrow's date; complimenting the host on his new Scandinavian furniture and basically chit-chatting like we do here.

That party, however, changed the direction of my entire vacation and vacations to come. For it was there I met Nigel Crawhall, employed by day at The National Language Project and by night at

The Cape Town AIDS Project as a safer-sex workshop facilitator.

As we conversed for nearly two hours on AIDS-related topics, it became painfully obvious his organization was severely understaffed (three people) and that he was severely close to burnout. After dinner, Nigel invited me to his next workshop which would be held two nights from then. I agreed to attend.

It was very enlightening to see this material presented from the South African point of view, where sizes of risk groups are different and where very frank discussions of this country's own faults are held.

As the workshop progressed, I became more and more involved answering questions and participating in the safer-sex role play workshop. The gleam in Nigel's eye had already told me what he was planning to ask after the workshop attendees had left. And I agreed to teach four workshops at the project and to lead a four-night facilitator training session sponsored by Planned Parenthood. This was very quickly turning into a working vacation.

I quickly observed the very low attendance at each of the workshops. Maybe two or three men (my buddy Robin always one of them) and only one woman the entire time. It was my horror to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

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Faith Brown-(Former Ms. Atlanta)
Midnight *Hunk Auction with RAVEN*

Art Auctions

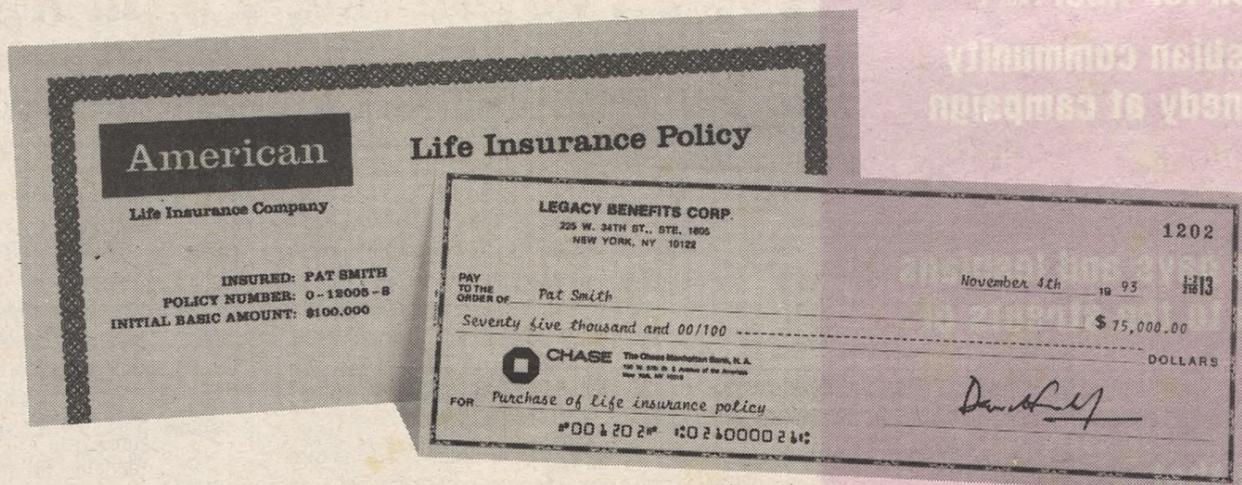
Sat. 8-9 *Angela Robinson-WXIA-TV*
Peg Bundy of Etc.
10-11 *Carla Conrad*
Midnight *Hunk Auction with Peg Bundy of Etc.*
Sun. 7-8* *Allie Rivenbark*
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11 *Hunk Auction with Kitty LeClaw*

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PARTNERSHIP STRUCK DOWN

Atlanta—The city of Atlanta's domestic partnership ordinances are expected to be struck down this week by a Fulton County Superior Court judge.

Though a final order hadn't been issued at press time, sources who attended a closed door hearing last week with Judge Issac Jenrette said he indicated that he will strike down both the ordinance setting up a partnership registry and another providing benefits to the domestic partners of city employees.

A final order was expected this week. A spokesman for Mayor Bill Campbell, a partnership supporter, said Campbell would direct the city's attorneys to immediately appeal Jenrette's ruling, and both sides expect the Georgia Supreme Court to have the final say.

Robin Shahar, one of the city's attorneys working on the case, said Jenrette found that the city exceeded the home rule powers granted to it by the state constitution in passing the partnership measures.

However, she said the judge upheld the city's human rights ordinance, passed in 1987, which prohibits the city from discriminating against anyone based on their sexual orientation. And the judge will also apparently refuse to allow the plaintiffs to ask for monetary damages from City Council members who voted in favor of the ordinance.

The main question still left unresolved at press time is whether Jenrette will allow the partnership registry, currently in effect; to continue while the case is appealed. The ruling doesn't affect the benefits ordinance, which never went into affect because Insurance Commissioner Tim Ryles would not give approval to extend benefits until the court case was resolved.

Last July, after a hard-fought battle, the

City Council enacted the domestic partnership ordinances. A storm of protest ensued when then-Mayor Maynard Jackson vetoed the benefits ordinance. He later reversed course, and the ordinance won approval on the second try.

That prompted a suit against the city by an array of partnership foes, including Family Concerns Inc., an anti-gay/lesbian rights group led by failed mayoral candidate Nancy Schaefer; the Southeastern Legal Foundation, a conservative public interest law group; state Rep. Billy McKinney, D-Atlanta; City Councilman Jared Samples and former City Councilman Buddy Fowlkes.

Shahar said the parties in the case are investigating procedures that would allow the case to go directly to the Supreme Court.

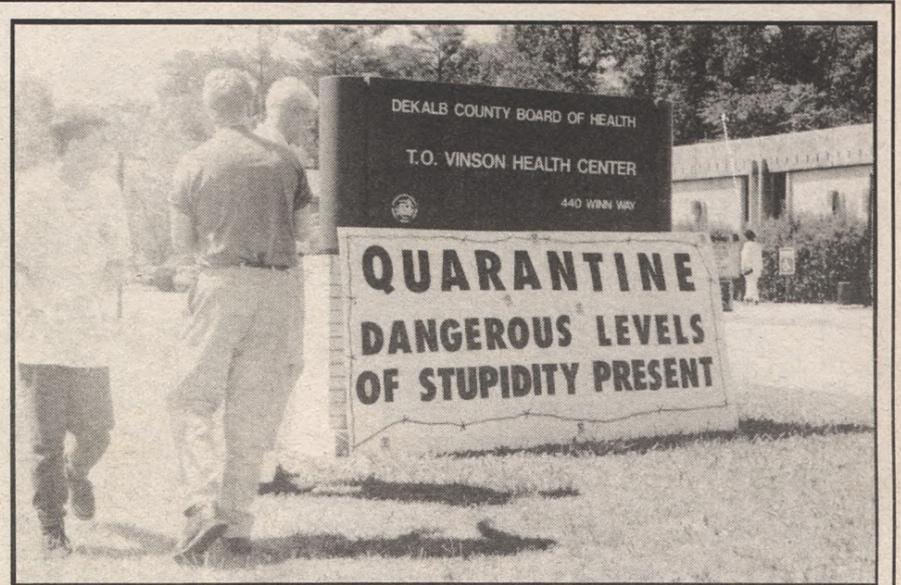
"I am hoping the Supreme Court will do the right thing and find our legislation constitutional," said City Councilwoman Mary Davis, the principal sponsor of the partnership ordinances. "It's important that we win it, for many reasons—for home rule, and for my concerns, which are social equity."

"I am hoping the Supreme Court will do the right thing and find our legislation constitutional," said City Councilwoman Mary Davis, the principal sponsor of the partnership ordinances. "It's important that we win it, for many reasons—for home rule, and for my concerns, which are social equity."

Larry Pellegrini, president of the Georgia ACLU's gay/lesbian rights chapter who lobbied for the ordinances, says Jenrette's ruling may actually help speed up the process by taking the case quickly to the Supreme Court. And he said an opinion earlier this year by Attorney General Michael Bowers that the ordinances were contrary to state law may have had a "chilling effect" on Jenrette's ruling.

"Since Bowers may have that kind of chilling effect on Jenrette or any judge between here and the Supreme Court, we'd rather go directly to the Supreme Court, where Bowers' opinion can be exposed as an inaccurate interpretation," Pellegrini said.

RICHARD SHUMATE



Kappers' supporters vow to keep up the protests and the pressure against the DeKalb County Board of Health.

Kappers ruling sparks protest

by CHRIS CASH

Atlanta—More than 50 people jammed the sidewalk in front of the Georgia Department of Human Resources building last Thursday to protest the home quarantine of HIV activist John Kappers.

Meanwhile, Kappers has turned to the Georgia Supreme Court in his fight to free himself from confinement in his home.

Two weeks ago, Kappers, who has multi drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and is HIV-positive, was confined indefinitely to his home by DeKalb County Superior Court Judge Daniel Coursey—despite testimony from two TB experts that he is symptom-free and not contagious.

"If this can happen to John Kappers in DeKalb County, then imagine what will happen to a person with no resources in Floyd County for example," said Mark King, executive director of the AIDS Survival Project, said at the protest, which was co-sponsored by his group and ACT UP/Atlanta.

"They are just a step away from isolating people who have no symptoms and no positive tests at all. They seem determined to follow a course of action that they appear to be making up as they go along, a course of action no other city or county is following and one that is detrimental to John."

Testimony at an April 11 hearing, where the decision was made to confine Kappers, indicated he had tested negative for TB for almost three months. But DeKalb health officials said they feared Kappers was still contagious and a threat to public health, and Coursey agreed.

Kappers' attorney, Chip Rowan of the AIDS Legal Project, filed an appeal of the quarantine with the Georgia Supreme Court.

"We asked the Supreme Court to review this case in an expedited manner because it involves basic constitutional rights—the right to be free of confinement—and unless they review it quickly, John may not live to see the outcome of the appeal," Rowan

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Olympics Out of Cobb breaks off negotiations with ACOG

Calls issued for both a massive march in 1996 and pressure aimed at Olympic sponsor Coca-Cola

by KC WILDMOON

Atlanta—After nearly two months of meetings that produced no agreement, the Olympics Out of Cobb Coalition has ended its negotiations with the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games over putting volleyball matches in Cobb County in 1996.

And last week, there were a number of other significant developments in the escalating battle over whether the Olympic games should be held in Cobb County:

- The Cobb County Commission, which last summer passed a resolution condemning the gay "lifestyle," issued a proclamation saying everyone would be welcome in Cobb during the games. But commission chairman Bill Byrne angered lesbian/gay activists when, after issuing the proclamation, he told a press conference that it would apply to Nazis as well as gays and lesbians. And he also said the commission would not repeal its original resolution.

- Stonewall 25, the group putting on the



Mayor Campbell told a neighborhood meeting last week that he advised Billy Payne to move the volleyball venue.

march in New York in June, called for a million supporters of lesbian/gay rights to descend on Cobb County in 1996. And the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLADD) has begun a nationwide telephone campaign to put pressure on the Olympics' most high-profile corporate sponsor, Atlanta-based Coca-Cola.

- Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell, who ear-

lier had refused to endorse the Olympics-out-of-Cobb campaign, told a neighborhood meeting in Peachtree Hills that he had advised ACOG president Billy Payne in a phone call last week that ACOG should abandon the venue in Cobb, according to GLADD executive director Carl Lange, who attended the meeting.

But when contacted later by Southern Voice, neither ACOG nor the mayor's office would confirm the conversation, although spokespersons for both Payne and Campbell did say they speak regularly, as did Nick Gold, the mayor's spokesman.

"[Campbell] wants to give ACOG and Billy Payne a little bit more time to do the right thing," Gold said.

- The mayor's newly-appointed gay/lesbian advisory committee met last week with Susan Langford, city government's liaison to ACOG, to outline its objections to holding Olympic events in Cobb County.

- Bruce Hayes, a 1984 Olympic gold medalist in swimming who was in Atlanta last week for a speaking engagement, said he sent a letter to International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch, urging that the venue be changed. Hayes, who is gay, wrote that asking gay athletes to compete in Cobb County "is akin to asking black athletes to participate in a sporting event in South Africa."

- U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-California, became the first senator to denounce the selection of Cobb to host Olympic volleyball in a

letter to Samaranch. She joins at least four members of the U.S. House who have called for the venue to be changed.

Though negotiations have ended, Jon-Ivan Weaver of the Olympics Out of Cobb Coalition said the group left on "friendly terms" with ACOG representatives.

"There's no reason to talk anymore," Weaver said. "We've told them all we need to tell them. But the pressure will continue to mount on ACOG, Billy Payne and poor little Izzy."

The final meeting between the two groups took place a day after Byrne held a news conference in Marietta to unveil a proclamation pledging to "provide the best in hospitality, facilities and amenities for all athletes and all visitors from all participating countries, without discrimination or hesitation."

But Byrne's proclamation did not mention gay men or lesbians specifically, and he pledged that the anti-gay resolution passed by the commission would stand.

"There's no one person or group that could bring or justify enough intimidation, pressure or threats that would convince us to rescind the resolution," he said.

Byrne went on to claim that lesbians and gay men were welcome in Cobb County, calling them "an integral part of the day-to-day life in Cobb County," but he then went on to compare the county's gay community to skinheads and neo-Nazis.

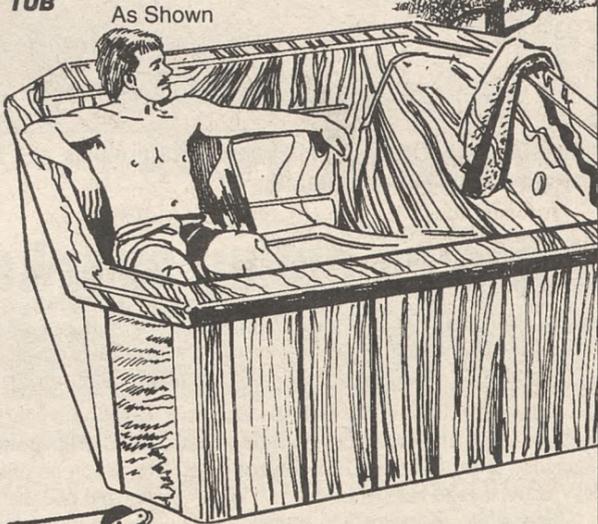
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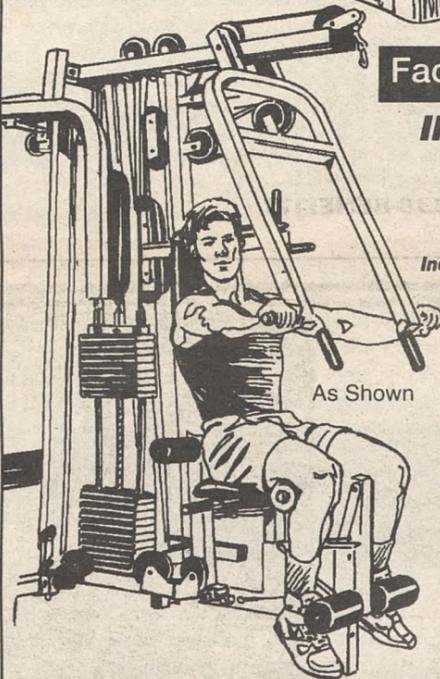
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SC Pride draws crowd of 2,000

Columbia, SC—A crowd of nearly 2,000 gay and lesbians marched through downtown Columbia to the steps of the Statehouse on April 16 to show their pride.

The fifth annual South Carolina Gay and Lesbian Pride March was the largest ever gathering of gays and lesbians in South Carolina, according to parade organizer Matt Tischler.

"I hope especially for those in the parade for the first time that this is a turning point in their lives," Tischler said. "For some, this is the first time they can show affection in public, a freedom others feel all the time and take for granted."

Speakers at the rally celebrated coming out in public and encouraged others to do so. They also called for the repeal of sodomy laws and AIDS education in public schools.

State Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, D-Orangeburg, called for equal rights for lesbians and gay men and respect for their dignity.

"We must reclaim this building and these steps," she said.

The keynote speaker was Mel White, a former ghostwriter for the Rev. Jerry Falwell and the Rev. Pat Robertson. White said gay men and lesbians want religion in their lives.

"I am gay. I am proud and God loves me for what I am," White said. "The fundamentalist church is wrong about gay and lesbian people."

A few Bible-carrying protesters who held signs saying "God's not gay" and "God condemns homosexuality" stood at the back of the crowd and shouted objections.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hensons raise \$10,000 in SF

Ovett, MS—Brenda and Wanda Henson say they will spend part of the \$10,000 in donations received during a trip to San Francisco for security improvements at Camp Sister Spirit, their feminist retreat.

"I feel more empowered," Brenda Henson said of the trip. "Just to know that you've got that support—we needed that."

Brenda and Wanda Henson, a lesbian couple, are back in Mississippi after a whirlwind tour where they spoke on San Francisco radio stations, in churches and at a benefit dinner held in their honor. Brenda Henson said the \$10,000 came from a combined effort of about 30 San Francisco community organizations.

Camp Sister Spirit has been the target of opposition in the Ovett area since November 1993. The Hensons are converting a 120-acre pig farm in rural Jones County into what they say will be a feminist educational and cultural retreat.

The Hensons say they have been frequently harassed, citing a mailed bomb threat that has sparked an FBI investigation, phoned death threats and a dead dog's carcass left over the mailbox at the retreat's entrance.

Brenda Henson said some of the funds from the California trip would be used to add more alarms, barbed wire fences and an emergency generator.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Court says past gay encounters are not grounds for annulment

Frankfort, KY—A sharply divided Kentucky Court of Appeals voided an annulment granted because the husband had a gay encounter a month before the wedding, saying the proper remedy was a divorce.

Writing for the court, Judge John Miller said Friday it would be unconstitutional to void a marriage because of a spouse's failure to disclose previous gay or lesbian relationships unless the same standard was applied to heterosexual unions.

Miller cited the Kentucky Supreme Court's controversial 1992 decision overturning the state's sodomy statute. The landmark ruling established a state constitutional right to privacy and the right of gays to equal treatment under the law.

Candace Denton of Mayfield sought the annulment in Graves Circuit Court after find-

ing out about the affair, shortly after her marriage to Jeffrey Scott Denton.

In voiding the marriage, Judge John Daughaday agreed that a person's sexual orientation is a material fact involving the essentials of marriage and that it must be disclosed to a prospective spouse.

The annulment spared Candace Denton the stigma of a divorce and meant that she could legally say she was never married.

The appeals court decision said the proper remedy was a divorce, as Jeffrey Denton contended, rather than an annulment. Denton opposed the annulment because he did not want to admit the marriage was fraudulent for fear of opening himself up to damages in a separate civil suit filed against him by his wife.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Student who threatened gays suspended by Florida college

Tampa, FL—The University of South Florida student who made telephone death threats to a gay and lesbian student group has been suspended from the university for two years.

The student, sophomore Nelson Trujillo, was told he could reapply to USF before then but that he must first undergo counseling with a licensed mental health counselor.

Trujillo, 20, still faces possible criminal charges through the Hillsborough State Attorney's Office.

In several anonymous calls to the USF Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Coalition, Trujillo had identified himself as a killer

and promised that particular numbers of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals would be murdered on certain dates.

Pam Morris, the co-chairwoman of the coalition, said she was satisfied with the two-year suspension. Now she and other students can put the episode behind them, she said.

Trujillo apologized for his actions in a letter sent to the USF Oracle newspaper earlier this month, saying he was acting out of "deep, deep frustration" with gay men and lesbians and a "lifestyle" he cannot agree with.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Courts Consider Pacific Northwest Ballot Initiatives:

The Oregon Citizens Alliance has dropped plans to qualify a new anti-gay ballot initiative after a judge ruled the initiative ineligible because it dealt with more than one issue. But OCA chair Lon Mabon said his group would work to have Judge Rod Miller's ruling overturned, and the group will split the initiative into two measures and try to get them on the 1996 ballot. In neighboring Washington, the state Supreme Court has announced that it will consider the state's request to dismiss a lawsuit that seeks to keep two proposed anti-gay initiatives off this year's ballot.



Susan Sarandon has joined the ranks of those protesting New York's AIDS budget.

More Arrests Protesting Giuliani:

Actresses Rosie Perez and Susan Sarandon and playwright Tony Kushner joined about 60 people demonstrating in front of New York's City Hall last week, protesting Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's considering of a plan to cut the city's Division of AIDS Services budget. "I don't expect him to change his conscience," Sarandon said. "But maybe at least his political savvy will see that this is not a smart thing to do." Two dozen demonstrators were arrested after the rally when they sat down and blocked a corridor near the mayor's office in City Hall.

UN Body Says Tasmania Violates Human Rights Of Gays:

The UN Human Rights Committee has ruled that Tasmania's anti-gay laws violate human rights agreements that Australia has signed, Australia's attorney general said last week. Tasmania's law provides penalties of up to 21 years in

jail for "unnatural" acts in private between homosexuals. The ruling decided a case brought to the United Nations by Tasmanian man Nick Toonen. The Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group called the committee's ruling "one of its most significant and far reaching decisions." The committee suggested that Tasmania repeal the laws.

Mother Loses Bid To Get Son Back From Gay Couple:

The Washington state Court of Appeals has ruled that a woman who gave up custody of her son, then tried to get him back after he was placed with gay foster parents, has no grounds to reclaim custody. Megan Lucas filed the request to reverse her decision to give up custody a day after a deadline set by state law. Later, she filed papers to adopt the boy herself, but the three-judge panel unanimously ruled that because she had already given up custody, she lacked legal standing to petition for adoption. Ross and Louis Lopton, the gay foster parents, hope to adopt the three-year-old boy. Lucas' attorney said the decision will be appealed.

Russian-American Gay Couple Rejected At Wedding Palace:

On April 12, Russian authorities turned down the application of a Russian-American gay couple for marriage. Robert Filippini and Yaroslav Mogutin arrived at Wedding Palace No. 4 clutching bouquets of flowers and their application, but Karman Bruyeva, director of the Wedding House, told the couple she could not accept the application. "I'm pretty broad-minded myself," Bruyeva said later. "But I'm afraid what they want is not possible under Russian laws." Filippini and Mogutin said they did not expect to be accepted, but Mogutin said they made the effort "to draw attention to the problems of homosexuals in Russia, protest the politics of sexism and show the strength of Russian-American ties."

Philly AIDS Task Force Head Resigns:

The head of Philadelphia's oldest AIDS support agency has resigned amid a probe of its fiscal management. Francis J. Stoffa Jr., executive director of the AIDS Task Force of Philadelphia, announced his departure last week during a meeting with the agency's finance committee. The 13-year-old organization has been under investigation by city officials who have criticized the agency after it did not complete audits required by contract with the government. The agency's auditor said in February that deficiencies and irregularities in the organization's books prevented it from completing the exam, and the Philadelphia Health Department announced that it was moving to terminate contracts that represent nearly half the agency's yearly budget.

Boston Dentist Calls Acer A Serial Killer:

A public health educator said a Florida dentist blamed for infecting six patients with HIV had all the characteristics of a serial killer. Boston dentist Leonard Horowitz, who has written and published a book on his views, said he concluded that "circumstantial evidence that [David] Acer acted deliberately is the only tenable explanation." Horowitz said he used FBI records and techniques in studying Acer possessed characteristics of a serial killer, such as developmental failures and social isolation. Acer died of AIDS in 1990.

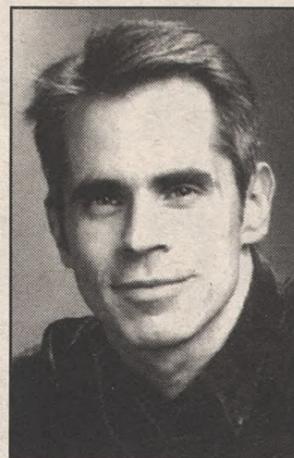
And... The Hawaii Senate approved a bill to block same-sex marriages, setting the stage for negotiations with the House, which has approved a substantially different version of the controversial measure... The California Supreme Court has ruled that a lesbian who signed an agreement to raise a child with her lover, the biological mother, has no parental rights to the child... The University of Colorado has revised its student health insurance program to extend coverage to gay and lesbian partners... The government of Denmark is considering making it a crime for people infected with HIV to have sex without using condoms... and New York Newsday has reported that closeted gay ultraconservative Roy Cohn, who died of AIDS in 1986, frequently corresponded with Ronald and Nancy Reagan and members of the Reagan administration, often to bolster the political position of New York Post owner and media mogul Rupert Murdoch.

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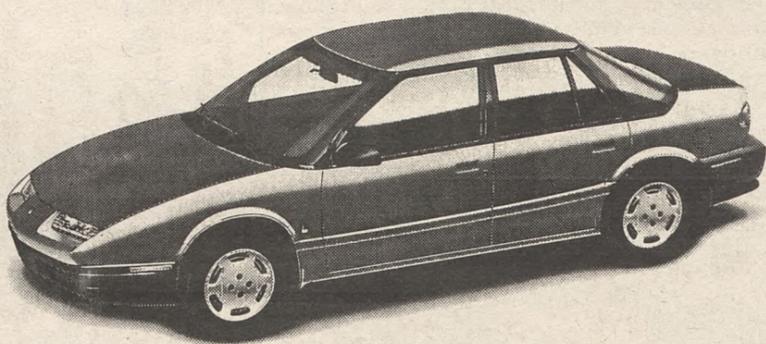
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Man critical after ax attack

Atlanta—Atlanta police are searching for a man they believed attacked another man in his home with an ax on last week and escaped with his victim's truck.

George Lee, 52, told police he picked up a man he knew only as "Billy" at the corner of 10th Street and Monroe Drive around 10 a.m. on the morning of Wednesday, April 20. Lee said he took him back to his home on Woodland Avenue in southeast Atlanta to work on his house. Neighbors called police when Lee

ran out of his house screaming. He is in critical but stable condition at Grady Memorial Hospital.

Lee's attacker was described as a young white man in his early 20s, about 6 feet tall, 180 pounds with brown hair. He was last seen wearing green shorts and no shirt. Neighbors saw him drive away in Lee's silver 1989 Toyota pickup truck. The license number is QC-6109.

Police are seeking anyone with information in this case.

Olympics

Continued from page 3

"They are welcome as people in Cobb County," Byrne said. "There are people here who are skinheads, pro-Nazis and filled with hate. They have a right to be here, as anyone else does, and to continue to be welcome here as long as they don't break the law or until they try to bring government to accept them and adopt them as a special group to be treated differently, and at that point in time we will take the same position toward them."

Though ACOG officials said they thought the proclamation was a positive step, Weaver says he was not impressed by Byrne's action.

"He didn't say anything," said Weaver. "He went on to say the resolution will not be rescinded. But by issuing this proclamation, he's admitting there's a problem with it."

The decision by Byrne and the rest of the commissioners to sign the proclamation came amid reports that they have been under pressure from members of Cobb County's business community, who are alarmed at the prospects of losing the Olympic venue.

Just two weeks ago, Byrne had told the

Marietta Daily Journal that losing the venue would have "zero impact" on the county, and that "anyone who tells you otherwise is full of shit."

As for Mayor Campbell, at an April 18 meeting of the Peachtree Hills Neighborhood Association, he was questioned about the Olympic controversy by Lange.

"I asked him, 'Have you responded to this issue and if so what has been your response?'" Lange said. "He actually referred to the Southern Voice article [in which he said he opposed the resolution, but would take no stand on the Olympic issue], and he said he had spoken to Billy Payne the day before and recommended to him that he remove the site from Cobb County."

GLAAD's New York chapter has called for major sponsors of the 1996 Olympics, such as Coca-Cola, to speak out on the issue.

"Holding an Olympic event in a county where lesbians and gay men are not welcome flies in the face of every principal the Olympics are supposed to uphold," said GLAAD/NY executive director Ellen Carton. "And so does Coca-Cola's silence as a primary sponsor of this event."

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Gay-owned DUI school sues WSB over January TV report

Atlanta—The city's only gay owned and operated defensive driving and DUI school has filed a multi-million dollar libel suit against WSB-TV Channel 2.

In January, Channel 2 aired a report on accusations by the state of deceptive practices at DUI schools, using film of the exterior of Midtown Defensive Driving and DUI School on Monroe Drive, both during the news report and in teasers promoting it.

But in his suit filed in Fulton County Superior Court, William Atkinson, the owner of Midtown, claims that WSB knew before the broadcast aired that the school was not accused of any wrongdoing but opted to use the video anyway.

The lawsuit claims that WSB continuously aired the teasers the week before its Jan. 31 special report about DUI schools that allow students to pay for class and not attend or send someone in their place. Atkinson's attorney, Jeffrey Fonseca, says he spoke with WSB reporter John Moore and producer Susan Chambers on the day the report was to have aired, informing them that Midtown had recently passed an audit by the Georgia Department of Human Resources, the state agency that oversees DUI schools, and there was no evidence of any wrongdoing by the school.

Fonseca said Chambers assured him all references to Midtown DUI would be deleted. But when the report aired, an exterior of the building was shown just prior to an interior shot of a school engaged in fraud.

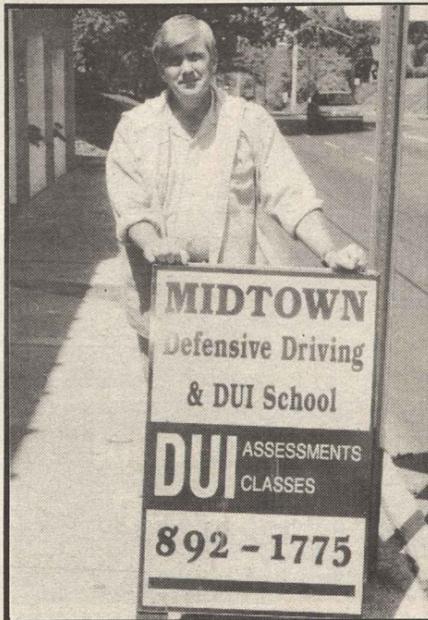
"They have an obligation and a responsibility to the public," said Fonseca. "If they're going to publish the news, they'd better be sure to do it responsibly."

Fonseca demanded a retraction from the station, and reporter Tom Regan did say at the end of the 10-minute report that no problems were found at Midtown DUI and another school, A-1, that was not shown in the report. But Fonseca says that was not enough.

"A lot of people didn't see this show on [Jan. 31]," he said. "But they did see the teasers during Super Bowl week."

According to the lawsuit, Midtown's business suffered during the next few weeks, and the school was flooded with calls from people asking if they could pay for the classes and not attend.

Fonseca says he finally spoke with WSB



Midtown DUI owner William Atkinson

attorneys, after requesting their names several times from both Moore and Chambers, on Feb. 4, and a retraction was aired on Feb. 7.

In a letter sent by WSB attorney Peter Canfield, dated Feb. 15, he said that WSB did everything in its power "to fully rectify any misimpression that you claim the broadcast could have caused" and that "so nondescript was this videotape [of the Midtown DUI school exterior], it is not surprising that it took you until Friday, Feb. 4, to discern and inform the station of its presence in the Jan. 31 broadcast."

When contacted by Southern Voice for comment, Canfield said he stood by the Feb. 15 letter, despite Fonseca's statements that he spoke to WSB personnel on Jan. 31. He downplayed the significance of the teasers aired the week before the broadcast.

"I don't think they were defamatory at all," Canfield said. "It just said WSB was going to do a story about DUI schools."

In a separate letter dated March 1, Canfield also said WSB would file suit against Fonseca and Midtown DUI for abusive litigation if Fonseca filed a complaint against the station.

KC WILDMOON

Kappers

Continued from page 3

says. "We hope they will do this quickly, see the legal errors made by DeKalb County and reverse the decision."

Kappers, although symptom free at this time, is vulnerable to the TB becoming active again. HIV-positive patients who contract MDR-TB are less likely to fully recover than other patients.

Protestors directed much of their anger at Dr. Kathleen Toomey, head of the DHR's division of infectious diseases. King, Jeff Graham of ACT UP and Dr. Stosh Ostrow met with Toomey and Dr. Lawrence Sanders of the DeKalb County Health Board the day before the protest to try to work open dialogue about the way MDR-TB patients are treated.

Graham contends that DeKalb County and the state of Georgia are spreading lies and hysteria via their treatment of Kappers and information they are disseminating about the case.

"The DHR has sent out information distorting the facts in this case," Graham said. "They said John was not compliant. They stood behind DeKalb County in saying that John is contagious, but that is not the consensus within the medical community."

"I hold DeKalb County and the state responsible for spreading hysteria."

DHR employees were among the many onlookers at the spirited demonstration, held at noon downtown at 2 Peachtree Street. While some stood inside the lobby, others came outside and asked what the protest was about. Fliers explaining the case were handed out by members of The AIDS Survival Project. One employee, secretary Eileen Banks, said she had read about Kappers and was confused by the conflicting information.

"If he is contagious, then he needs to be isolated," she said. "But it seems nobody knows that for sure. If he isn't, they are treating him really wrong and they need to stop."

Security at the protest was lax until three demonstrators went inside the building. They were told to leave and one demonstrator, Alicia Culver, associate director of the AIDS Survival Project, was forced out the door.

"He pinched and grabbed my arm and pushed me, yelling at me to get out," Culver said. "He had no badge, no identification. I don't know who he was."

Demonstrators approached the front of the building and banged on the windows at the end of the protest. "We'll be back and we'll be stronger," they chanted. Security asked the protestors to move away from the building, and they complied.

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Ten things gay men need to learn about lesbians, in the next Southern Voice.

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Kappers case illustrates the power of fear

For some in Atlanta's HIV community, the plight of John Kappers has been cause for personal concern. One man with AIDS who wrote to Southern Voice anonymously about his feelings put into words what a number of people likely have been thinking.

This man saw a photograph of Kappers that ran in the paper next to an article discussing his battles with the DeKalb County Board of Health. From the photo, the man realized that he had been in contact with Kappers. What he didn't know at the time of that contact was that Kappers was infected with a virulent strain of tuberculosis that is resistant to many of the conventional TB drug treatments. For someone with a compromised immune system, this type of TB is nearly always fatal.

He was concerned that Kappers was not wearing a mask. He was concerned that Kappers had not let those around him know. "He has rights as an individual, but so do other people that he may have potentially exposed that don't have the immune system to resist," the man said.

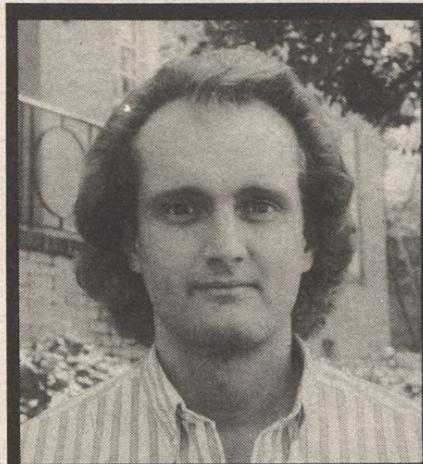
"I support Mr. Kappers' rights as an individual, but his right to breathe or cough ends where my right to inhale begins."

Two weeks ago, the DeKalb County Board of Health got a judge to order Kappers, a long-term AIDS survivor, put under house arrest because of his drug-resistant TB, despite uncontroverted evidence from two of the top TB experts in the country that he isn't—repeat *isn't*—contagious. Also, TB is not spread that easily, usually requiring prolonged contact with a contagious person before infection takes place.

The concern of the man who wrote Southern Voice is understandable. When one's health is precarious, caution is not an unreasonable emotion, even if it is not supported by the facts. But the behavior of DeKalb County's health authorities is neither understandable nor reasonable, and, as medical professionals, they really ought to know better.

The reason John Kappers is being held prisoner in his home has nothing to do with legitimate public health concerns. It has everything to do with timid bureaucrats who are afraid of the flack they might receive in the nearly-impossible event drug-resistant TB spreads from Kappers to the general population. The fact that the house arrest order could amount to a life sentence for someone in Kappers' medical condition seems to be a secondary consideration, if indeed it has been considered at all.

The actions of the DeKalb health officials would be justified if he were defying their legitimate medical orders. But since his diagnosis in January, Kappers, a registered



Letter from the editor

by RICHARD SHUMATE

nurse, has complied with every request they have made. During the time when it was feared he was contagious, he wore a mask. He didn't fight an earlier order to stay at home. He has been following a course of treatment with four drugs and even agreed to let people from the health department observe him to make sure he was taking his daily dosage.

John Kappers is not prowling the streets of DeKalb County, deliberately spreading contagions willy nilly. No one knows better than he how frightening drug-resistant TB can be. The last thing he would want to do is give it to anybody else. As a medical professional and HIV treatment activist, he has dedicated himself to providing information to people living with HIV through a column he writes for the AIDS Survival Project's newsletter. If he believed he was a threat to these people that he has worked so hard to help, Kappers would not need county health officials to tell him to stay home or wear a mask. Kappers would take those steps himself.

The facts are these. The drug therapy has, at least so far, worked, and Kappers has beaten the incredible odds stacked against him. He has taken 12 sputum smear tests, which are used to determine whether someone with TB is contagious, and all 12 have been negative.

In New York City and other places that have established protocols for treating multiple drug-resistant TB, three negative tests are considered enough evidence to allow a patient to be taken from isolation. Public health officials around the country who have been contacted in conjunction with Kappers'

case concur with that three-test protocol, virtually unanimously.

The doctors at the DeKalb Board of Health know this, but yet they persist in maintaining that he is a potential menace to the public health. Because they have no established protocol for handling drug-resistant TB, they are making up new policies as they go along. During a recent court hearing, they put masks on the judge and courtroom personnel—despite the fact that Kappers was wearing a mask that would have kept any TB bacteria from the air. The health officials cordoned off the elevator Kappers used to get to the courtroom. They brought in an extraordinary amount of security, as if Kappers were some kind of criminal.

By turning this case into a scary public spectacle, they have only served to widen the hysteria over drug-resistant TB. As a tactic, the circus atmosphere worked—they got their order confining Kappers—but in the long run, it will do more harm than good. People such as the man who wrote to Southern Voice to express his concern about the Kappers case will see these extraordinary—and unnecessary—precautions and become even more frightened.

What is happening in DeKalb County these days is reminiscent of what happened in the early days of AIDS, when fear overrode common sense in the execution of public health policy and made some health care workers balk at treating AIDS patients. There were calls then to quarantine people with HIV.

Several years ago, CBS' "60 Minutes" aired a segment on Cuba's response to the HIV crisis, which was, namely, to build special prisons for those with HIV and keep them there indefinitely. As a result, HIV has not spread into the population as rapidly as it has in some other nations, including the United States. After the segment ran, CBS aired letters it received from people who said the United States should have done the same thing.

That, of course, would require repeal of the Constitution, which guarantees that people can't be indefinitely confined by the government for no good reason. The last time I checked, the Constitution was still in place and in force—even in DeKalb County.

Multiple drug-resistant TB is, of course, nothing to fool with. DeKalb health officials should do everything they can to make sure that it doesn't spread. But what they don't seem to realize is that because Kappers isn't contagious, keeping him in his house doesn't do a damned thing to accomplish that goal.

At this point, their ignorance is a much bigger threat to the public good than John Kappers will ever be.

L E T T E R

Atlanta's gays need caution like the comatose need rest

In [the SoVo] issue of April 14, a letter writer offers "a word of caution" regarding such actions as boycotts and letters of protest about "a certain rebel T-shirt."

Caution is good, I've used caution. Some of my best friends are cautious. It's just that advising caution to the Atlanta gay community is a little like prescribing bed rest to the comatose.

Yes, we have a good but overworked

group of lesbian, gay and bisexual activists, but overall, caution permeates our lives and lines the walls of our every closet. In my humble opinion, we could all better benefit from a little more gumption.

The letter does not make clear what alternative action, if any, the writer recommends, but in my view, after listening to the other side's opinion, we not only have the right but the duty to respond.

As for Cobb County, if we allow a community with an anti-gay resolution to be rewarded with the prestige of the Olympics, what kind of message are we sending to other counties and towns that may consider passing similar legislation?

Diego Sans
Atlanta

Why must the show go on even after the victory is won?

It was all over, the performance. The skits and sketches completed now. Lights, baby keys and floods, extinguished. The laughter caused and caught in the electronic web intended for just such a purpose. The curtain down, the performers exited stages right and left. And still the audience sat on the bleachers. Waiting.

For what?
Show's over.
But no one moved to shrug into a coat or "excuse me" down the row to the this-way-out signs. They sat.

And finally, she pushed the curtain aside and faced them, the fans who didn't want to depart. Who wouldn't go till everything was final. Finished. Over and done. And, maybe, not even then, honestly, given the chance. Maybe if they stayed, someone would start the show all over again. No one wanted to break the spell.

Then she parted the curtain for the final call facing them where they sat, still, and wanted more and waited.

So she stood before them and thanked them for coming. In her chenille bathrobe and grease-paint and laughing condescension that was more than a trademark. An expectation. Fulfilled for them. And she, staring and shaking her head in mock disbelief, breaking the tension, said "What are you people still doing here? We're all finished. *Go home.*"

They'd called a town meeting for seven o'clock. It was to decide what it was they were going to do now.

They had come together in committee in crisis. It was a hard birth, born of necessity and attack. The fundies had been more than organizing, they'd been menacing. Proposing an actual amendment that had every one quaking in the balance. What would we do? What would we do?



Cleaning Out My Closet

by SHELLY ROBERTS

What they did was everything they could to stop it. After an impossibly slow start, with a single-minded purpose, they became the protection committee of record, the action organization of note, the politically correctly-formulated arm movement designed to slash and stop the threat.

They raised funds and printed T-shirts and met centrally. They sent home delegates who'd come on no particular organization's orders to go back home and organize the county committees into order and action should it become necessary.

The purpose was basic training. Military survival skills in an army to which we had not been recruited. For duties to which they were volunteering.

Everyone had wrangled over authorization and territory. Old groups sent their seniors to inspect the upstarts. Burn-outs had relit themselves with both purpose and opportunity. And

newcomers had caught a gauntlet.

What was amazing was not what they did, but that, after wrestling for way too long to get to do it, that they were able to do anything at all.

They met on a regular basis. They built a tiny war chest. And grew it bigger by return requested envelopes and picnics. They put out a newsletter. They had legislative monitors and position papers and spokespeople. They caravaned partisan audiences to TV stations to sit respectfully observant or interruptive at the Sunday morning shows on which the other side intended to parade Satan. They showed up at churches wherever the other side showed videos of our satanic parades. They fought public fear with fervor.

And they even generally did a good job of arousing the ones of us for whom arousal usually carried a very different meaning.

They held speakers trainings that had the tongue-tied making proclamations by the end. And they imported Oregonians. And Coloradists. For inspiration. And lesson plans.

You'd have been amazed.
Then an amazing thing happened. We won.

Oh, not by the weight of our picket signs. Not even by the rightness of our cause. Or the wrong-headedness of theirs. We won because of the other side's carelessness. And our due diligence in pointing out to the powers that be that they had got the wording wrong. That the purpose wasn't stated accurately. That the petition to turn our lives back into felonies didn't stand up to judicial standards. And incidentally, they didn't have the signatures to put our affections up for a vote.

The fundies were told to go home. Not just by us, but by the justices of the Florida Supreme Court, who agreed with all our arguments on human rights and wrongs and found a way to tell them that they were not the ma-

majority our terror had crafted them into.

Oh, sure, some said it wasn't a clear cut victory. They complained bitterly that the judgment only proclaimed, clerical error and not conspicuous conquest. But the reality is that to vanquish is to win for the prevailing side, and for a change, we prevailed.

They can't come back again in Florida. At least not easily. That's what the clerical judgment meant. And the fundies seem kind of silly in the state now. They learned that not enough are willing to put their names on the line in the name of prejudice and bias.

So now the committee has called a town meeting. Invited everyone. So they can set a new agenda.

The word disband has never even occurred to them. The newsletter editor would not have a printing platform. The steering committee would be directionless. The legal committees would be without precedent. The fundraisers would be deflated. The strategists would have no position to take on the weekends.

At the town meeting, though no one in town showed up, they preached diligence and vigilance. With no one to vote against. And so was invoked the most important of all of Newton's laws of society: that an organization in motion shall tend in perpetuity to stay in motion.

Sometimes I think, along with chair and co-chair, with recordkeeper and coin keeper, it ought to be a requirement that every new organization—particularly the ad hoc's and pro tem's—designate one official chenille bathrobe wearer to stand before the assembled group at the appropriate time and loudly proclaim, "What are you people still doing here? We're all finished. *Go home.*"

LETTERS

Confederate story a bunch of bull

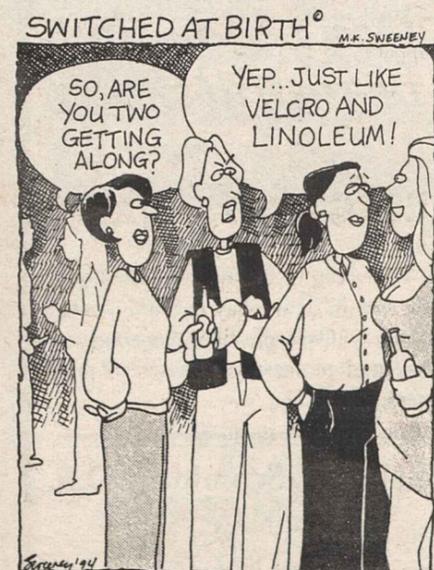
The article in your March 31 issue by Richard Shumate regarding the Stars and Bars was the biggest bunch of bull I have read in many years. The idea that proud gay and lesbian Southerners who support the Confederate flag are in reality supporting groups that wish to persecute them is absurd. As the old saying goes, politics makes strange bed fellows is correct in this case. Just look at the crazies that gays and lesbians joined with to elect the biggest liar in history president.

True, some of the groups that are supporting the Confederate flag issue are repulsive in many of their thoughts but are correct in their thinking here. There is nothing wrong in join-

ing these groups on this point but opposing them on the rest of their agenda. Political correctness is only another term for censorship. It tells you that you are wrong for disagreeing with vocal groups who are posing as a majority. As we have seen in history, the vocal groups like the Nazis in Germany and the Communists in Russia were not the majority but were able to convince the majority [that] there must be something wrong with their thinking for disagreeing. We see what happened there, and political correctness is attempting the same here.

I urge all Southerners and others who support the Confederate flag to continue the struggle. Our gay and lesbian friends will use faulty logic, as in the article, to convince us that we are wrong, stupid and racist, but this is their way to censor your identity and ideas. Don't give up the fight.

Larry Parr
Atlanta



Send us a letter

Southern Voice welcomes your point of view. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 200 words and must include your name, address and daytime phone number. Names can be withheld on request, but anonymous letters are not accepted. We reserve the right to edit or reject any submission. Send letters to: Southern Voice, P.O. Box 18215, Atlanta GA 30316. Or fax them to the attention of Richard Shumate at (404) 876-2709.

"The streets of heaven are too crowded with angels..."

What follows is a transcript of the speech given by actor Tom Hanks as he accepted the Academy Award for his role in "Philadelphia."

Here's what I know.

I could not be standing here without that "undying love" that was just in the ballad, not by Bruce, but by Neil Young. And I have that in a lover that is so close to fine, we should all be able to experience such heaven right here on earth. I know also that—I shouldn't be doing this—I should not be here, but I am because of the union of such film makers: Ed Saxon, Ron Nyswaner, Christie Ziatoc Fujimoto—Jonathan Demme, who seems to have these [the Oscar in his hand] attached to his limbs for every actor that has ever worked with him of late.

And a cast that includes Antonio Banderas, who, second to my lover, is the only person I would trade for. And a cast that includes many other people, but the actor who really put his film image at risk, and has shown because of his integrity, Mr. Denzel Washington, who I really must share this with.

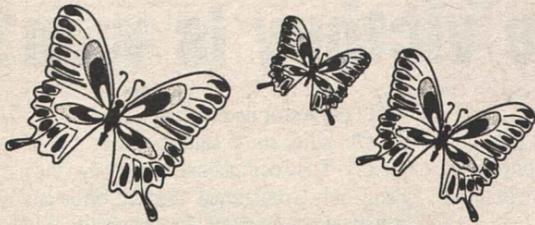
I would not be standing here if it weren't for two very important men in my life, two that I hadn't spoken with for a while, but I had the pleasure just the

other evening, Mr. Rawley Farnsworth, who was my high school drama teacher, who taught me "Act well the part, there all the glory lies." And one was my classmate under Mr. Farnsworth, Mr. John Gilkerson.

I mention their names because they are two of the finest gay Americans, two wonderful men, that I had the good fortune to be associated with, to fall under their inspiration at such a young age. And I wish my babies could have the same sort of teacher and the same sort of friend.

And there lies my dilemma here tonight. I know that my work in this case is magnified by the fact the streets of heaven are too crowded with angels. We know their names. They number a thousand for each of the red ribbons we wear here tonight. They finally rest in the warm embrace of the Creator of us all, a healing embrace that cools their fevers, that clears their skin, and allows their eyes to see the simple self-evident common-sense truth that is made manifest by the benevolent Creator of us all, and was written down on paper by wise men, tolerant men, in the city of Philadelphia two hundred years ago.

God bless you all, God have mercy on us all and God bless America.



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Study finds hysterectomies help women with benign uterine conditions

Portland, ME—A ground-breaking study of nearly 800 Maine women treated for benign uterine conditions found that those who had a hysterectomy felt better a year after surgery.

The study's authors said they were surprised at the high percentage of women who found hysterectomy effective in relieving symptoms such as chronic pelvic pain, abnormal bleeding and fibroids, and in improving overall quality of life.

"This is not what we expected to find," said Dr. Karen J. Carlson, a primary care physician at Massachusetts General Hospital and principal investigator of the study that also involved women who received nonsurgical treatment.

Another surprise, Carlson said, was the relative infrequency of new problems such as hot flashes, weight gain, depression and lack of interest in sex reported by women who had a hysterectomy.

Seventy-three percent of the patients who underwent surgery had very negative feelings about their health prior to the operation; three months later, 71 percent had very positive feelings about their health, the study found.

"The clear majority of women described very positive improvements," Carlson told a news conference at Maine Medical Center.

Although many of the women treated nonsurgically felt better up to a year later, those with fibroids showed the least improvement. And at least 25 percent of the women in the nonsurgical group went on to have a hysterectomy within the year to relieve their symptoms.

The Maine Medical Assessment Foundation said its study of 798 Maine women between 25 and 50 was the largest of its kind and

the first in the nation to document the effectiveness of hysterectomy.

The women were treated between 1989 and 1991, with 418 choosing hysterectomy and 380 treated non-surgically. They were interviewed at the start of treatment and three, six and 12 months later.

The study, coauthored by Drs. Buell A. Miller and Floyd J. Fowler, was published in the April issue of *Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

The foundation said the study's purpose is to provide additional information to women and their doctors as they choose between hysterectomy or nonsurgical treatment for non-cancerous uterine problems.

Hysterectomy, the removal of the uterus, is performed about 590,000 times a year and is the second most common major surgical procedure in the nation, according to the foundation. Nonsurgical alternatives to benign uterine disorders include drug therapy and observation.

The study said a scarcity of clinical data regarding the effectiveness of hysterectomy has led to uncertainty among physicians about when the operation is appropriate.

"Concern about unnecessary hysterectomies has been voiced by physicians, policy makers and patients for over 40 years," the study found.

Miller said he did not think the new findings would bring about a dramatic rise in the number of hysterectomies in Maine, where the surgery is performed at a rate well below the national average.

"This is a very conservative area of the country," he said.

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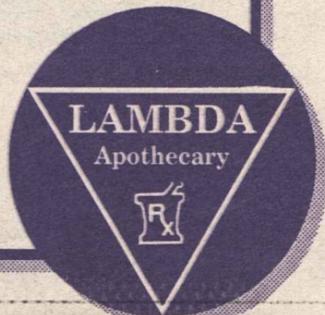
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Food and Drug Administration approves Taxol for advanced breast cancer

Washington, DC—The Food and Drug Administration has approved the anti-cancer drug Taxol for use in advanced breast cancer patients, the drug's manufacturer said April 14.

Taxol was originally approved in 1992 for treatment of metastatic ovarian cancer. Now doctors can also use it to treat women with metastatic breast cancer who don't respond to chemotherapy or who relapse despite it, said Bristol-Myers Squibb Co.

An FDA advisory committee recommended approval of the drug in December, citing trials in which more than 554 breast cancer patients here and abroad used the drug to fight spreading cancer.

Side effects include immune suppression, hair loss, numbness and muscle or bone pain.

Bristol-Myers said Taxol can be infused into patients over a three-hour period, allowing them to receive the drug without checking into a hospital.

Taxol has been derived from the Pacific Yew tree, prompting concern about supplies as the trees dwindled. Bristol-Myers said Thursday there is enough Taxol to meet patient demand and to provide the National Cancer Institute with the drug for research. Meanwhile, it expects FDA approval soon of a synthetic method of manufacturing the drug.

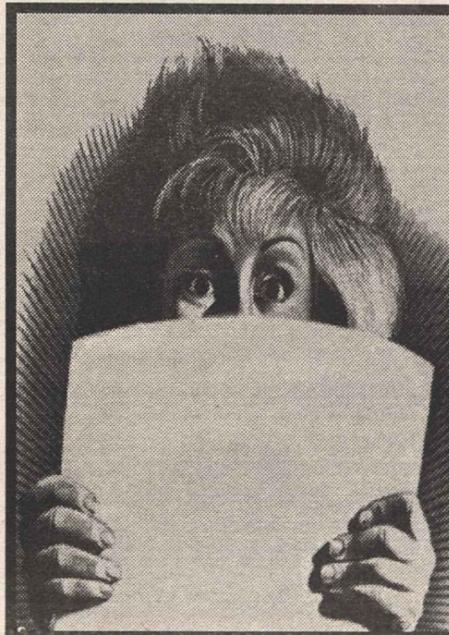
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Hyperthermia resurfaces, FDA ok's limited tests

Washington, DC—Hyperthermia, the controversial AIDS treatment developed by a team of Atlanta doctors in 1990 is back. With notes of caution about creating false hope, proponents of a limited study to review the once-dismissed treatment that heats a patient's blood say every potential weapon against the disease must be explored.

"Right now, the situation is pretty grim," Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., said April 14. "If there is a chance to do something, then perhaps it's a situation for a great deal of optimism."

Lautenberg, who began advocating consideration of "hyperthermia" after learning of it from a constituent, spoke at a news conference giving further details about a feasibility study for the treatment.

Officials with the Food and Drug Administration said HemoCleanse Inc. of West Lafayette, Ind., recently won approval to conduct the experimental treatment on six patients in Miami. The FDA remains doubtful of its effectiveness, but said it is worthwhile to explore alternative approaches.

The National Institutes of Health blocked similar research in 1990 by Dr. Kenneth Alonso and another doctor in Atlanta, after declaring that one of the supposedly cured patients, Carl Crawford, had cat scratch fever, not Kaposi's sarcoma.

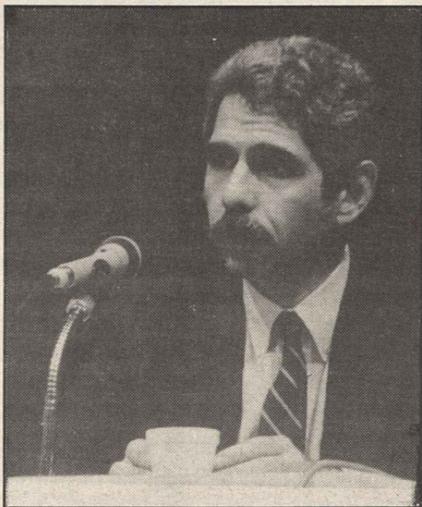
The experiment was moved to Mexico, where another patient treated with hyperthermia died.

Crawford, 37, of Atlanta; and another former patient, Chuck DeMarco, 35, of Union City, N.J. were at the April 14 news conference with Lautenberg and Alonso. Both said they are healthy and credited hyperthermia with their recovery from AIDS.

DeMarco, who told Lautenberg of the procedure at a town meeting, said he quickly began recovering after being treated three years ago in Rome. He had suffered from a chronic cough, was sleeping at least 18 hours a day and had Kaposi's sarcoma lesions on his throat and thigh.

"I went walking around Rome for a couple of hours, hopped a train to Venice and spent 10 days there," DeMarco said.

Alonso said Pittsburgh-based IDT Inc., which is working with HemoCleanse, will test the safety of the device used to heat the blood up to 115 degrees and put it back in the patient at a slightly cooler temperature to kill off the virus in bone marrow and organs. He said re-



Hyperthermia proponent Dr. Kenneth Alonso speaks to a NAPWA/Atlanta forum in Atlanta in 1990.

searchers need to see if the virus was killed, and if patients' immune systems are stimulated.

He said the original tests have been modified to reduce the flow of blood back into the body, thus improving safety levels. He likened the procedure to dialysis.

Alonso said 19 of 31 patients who underwent the procedure in Italy survived the first year, when statistics indicated only 11 would have survived without any treatment. He said learning survival rates for subsequent years have been hampered by difficulties in tracking patients since the studies were conducted outside the United States.

"We have demonstrated a survival advantage," Alonso said. "In this illness, what counts is survival. Do you live?"

Derek Hodel, treatment issues director for the AIDS Action Council in Washington, said the FDA has been appropriately cautious to allow studies on AIDS treatments to compile data.

Hodel said it is too early to point to "blood boiling" as reason for optimism.

"Hyperthermia had a big media splash before," Hodel said. "The consensus in the community about hyperthermia is that it really had unwarranted publicity several years ago."

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Study: HIV can cause cancer directly

San Francisco—Scientists already know that infection with HIV can lead to cancer by weakening the immune system. But a new study suggests the virus causes cancer directly, by switching on cancer genes in the cells it invades.

The finding could lead to better treatment for both AIDS and cancer. But it also raises doubts about the safety of some forms of gene therapy and casts a cloud over scientists' goal of creating an AIDS vaccine.

AIDS has been associated with certain types of cancer, including lymphoma and Kaposi's sarcoma, that most researchers believe take advantage of the weakening of the immune system.

But in a study in early April, researchers at the University of California at San Francisco found that when HIV inserts its genetic material into a cell's DNA, it can apparently activate a nearby cancer-causing gene.

That gene then starts up a less common variety of lymphoma, non-B-cell lymphoma,

though the exact mechanism remains a mystery, Drs. Michael McGrath and Bruce Shiramizu said.

But the study also casts a cloud over the goal of creating a live-virus AIDS vaccine. The study's authors and other scientists fear such a vaccine could trigger cancer genes while halting AIDS.

"This causes a lot of concern over the use of retroviruses for anything—for vaccines or even gene therapy," McGrath said. "Hooking up a gene to a retrovirus and then infecting human cells might risk cancer."

Dr. Irving Chen, director of the University of California at Los Angeles AIDS Institute, called the study very important if confirmed.

But he said it was important to know how often the virus caused cancer, and how long it takes to develop. That could determine whether a future AIDS vaccine is worth the cancer risk.

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Study says don't fire those with HIV

Atlanta—A Georgia State University study indicates there is little economic incentive for companies to fire workers with HIV.

An employee infected with HIV would cost an employer an average of \$17,000 in health benefits and other expenses over five years, said the study released in mid-April.

"This relatively low expected business cost, combined with the intangible aspects of an employee's knowledge and experience, suggests that there are significant benefits for an employer to retain HIV-infected workers on the job as long as their health permits," said Paul G. Farnham, an associate professor of economics at Georgia State.

The study was based on a statistical model of a 35-year-old worker at a company with more than 100 employees.

Farnham conducted the study with Robin G. Gorsky, associate professor of health management and policy in the University of New Hampshire's School of Health and Human Services.

Estimates of the lifetime medical costs of HIV and AIDS have been as high as \$100,000. This study did not dispute such estimates but said employers would not bear all the costs.

Under the model used in the study, the costs include health insurance, disability ben-

efits, recruiting, hiring and training costs, employee life insurance and pension costs. The hypothetical worker had a 66 percent likelihood of not developing AIDS.

"Because information on the business costs of the epidemic is not readily available, companies may...assume that these costs will be borne entirely by the firm," Farnham said.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibited workplace discrimination against AIDS, though AIDS advocates say such firings do occur.

"Over the history of the epidemic, we have seen literally thousands of people with HIV lose their jobs through discriminatory employment practices under the guise of economic disadvantage to the employer," said Daniel Bross, executive director of the Washington-based AIDS Action Council.

The study, he said, "clearly shows something we as AIDS advocates and people living with AIDS have said for years—people cannot hide behind economics to keep people with AIDS from continuing on their jobs."

The study is being published this month in *Inquiry*, a publication of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Rochester, N.Y.

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Stadtlanders Foundation gives grants

The Stadtlanders Foundation HIV/AIDS Community Grant Fund has announced the completion of its initial granting cycle. Forty-three AIDS service organizations will receive support for HIV/AIDS treatment information and nutrition programs. Georgia recipients were Phoenix Project of Union Mission, Inc. in Savannah and Atlanta's Project Open Hand.

Grant applications exceeded \$1 million; a total of \$100,000 was awarded, all of which was donated by the foundation, established in 1993 by the giant Statlanders Pharmacy.

In order to raise more money, The Stadtlanders Foundation has launched the "Raise The Rainbow" fund-raising project. A one-mile long rainbow flag will be carried up

5th Avenue in New York City on June 26 as part of the Stonewall 25 March. Those who make a tax-deductible contribution of \$50 to take part in the historic event will receive a 3-foot wide commemorative strip of the flag following the event. Because all costs for the flag are being underwritten by Stadtlanders Pharmacy, all money donated by marchers will go directly to The Stadtlanders Foundation HIV/AIDS Community Grant fund, to be awarded in grants to AIDS service organizations this fall.

For more information on The Stadtlanders Foundation and/or how you can support Raise The Rainbow call 1-800-NYC-1994.

Billboard condom creates controversy

West Haven, CT—An anti-AIDS billboard that displays a huge, rolled-up condom has gotten a big reaction from some local merchants.

Mini Dillon, whose children's boutique is directly below the billboard, is especially upset by the size of the condom.

"It's sad. Nobody's reading the message because they're too distracted by the picture and too busy laughing at it," she said this week. "I disapprove of the big condom—especially over a baby store—but there's nothing we can do about it."

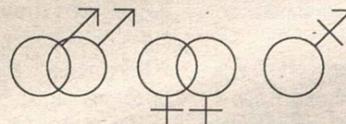
The billboard, located in the heart of downtown across from City Hall and facing the First Congregational Church, also bears a message: "The second best way to prevent AIDS." The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation is listed beneath the message.

Gannett Outdoor Advertising, a national company with a New Haven office, erected the sign as part of a commitment to support Taylor's AIDS foundation with free billboards this year, said Seth Bosin, vice president of marketing.

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ALFA: What did the group mean and why did it die?

by KC WILDMOON

The Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance died quietly last week, put to rest after a legacy spanning 22 years of political activity, softball games, Azalea Dances, parties, meetings, and marches.

Only a dozen members of the organization met to cast the final vote on ALFA's fate on April 10, a reflection of the dwindling interest that has plagued the group for years and, ultimately, forced it to end.

The closure of ALFA has a great deal of meaning to many women in Atlanta and elsewhere. The organization's newsletter, at its peak, reached hundreds of feminist lesbians, giving them access to information and community they could find nowhere else. ALFA's library and archives were a rich resource, with a collection of lesbian and feminist books and periodicals spanning nearly three decades.

All that will soon be gone. The periodicals have been sold to Duke University, and the remaining members of the group are still deciding what to do with the library's books. But the question remains—what happened?

ALFA's birth in the early 1970s came during a different era. The United States was embroiled in an increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam, and everywhere burgeoning political idealism surfaced in the minds and hearts of a populace only a few years out of the turbulent 60s. In addition to war protestors, the feminist movement gained strength and numbers, as did a surprising movement—that of lesbians and gay men slowly but surely poking their heads and then their bodies out of long shut closets and stepping into the streets.

The Stonewall riots of 1969 had awakened a community that had long endured endless torment and discrimination at the hands of authorities—police, government officials, business leaders. But when those drag queens tossed the first brick on that hot summer day in New York City, a movement was born, and it spread across the country.

In Atlanta, a chapter of the Gay Liberation Front had formed, holding meetings and dances in a warehouse space on Pine Street in Midtown. But that wasn't enough for a handful of women who wanted something a little more—something that focussed exclusively on women.

"The original women, as I understand it, were...from the Gay Liberation Front, and then Atlanta Women's Liberation," said Lorraine Fontana, who was an early ALFA member. "And then people like myself who weren't into any group but had contacts in left politics."

"Eventually it grew to people who weren't necessarily into the political background, but women who were coming out and wanted to be with other women," she continued.

That early combination of diverse political and social interests may have sewn the seeds of ALFA's eventual demise even as the group began. But in those early years, there was plenty available for either group—parties, dances, the first out lesbian softball team in a city league (the Omegas), and political discussions, marches and meetings.

"It wasn't the kind of place where, if you wanted agreement and common discussion, you would have enjoyed," Fontana said with a laugh.

Many of ALFA's members lived in collec-



The ALFA contingent at the first national March on Washington in 1979

tive households in the 70s—Upstairs and Downstairs, and later the Lavendar Cubbin and Rubyfruit Jungle. And ALFA members spawned numerous other groups—both political and social. There was DAR II (Dykes for the 2nd American Revolution), a group of ALFA women who wanted to pursue a socialist agenda; the Atlanta Women's Union, a similar group; Red Dyke Theatre; several women's music production companies, including Lucina's Music; more softball teams. For its first 10 years, ALFA was a center of lesbian activity in the city, all stemming from the green and white rental house on McLendon Avenue in Little Five Points.

But after its 10th birthday in 1982—an all

weekend affair that included the debut of the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus—membership and interest began a slow decline. In the late 80s, the group bought a house in Kirkwood, with the idea of creating a permanent space for women. But as work on renovations of the house seemed to never end, interest in the organization waned further, leaving fewer and fewer people to do what needed to be done. A typical malady—burnout—ensued.

"I felt like if we got rid of the house, moved to a smaller place, we could survive," said "Wild" Jean, a member of ALFA since the early 80s. "When you go to the house, you feel depressed."

Wild Jean believes that without the house,

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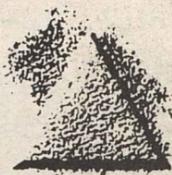
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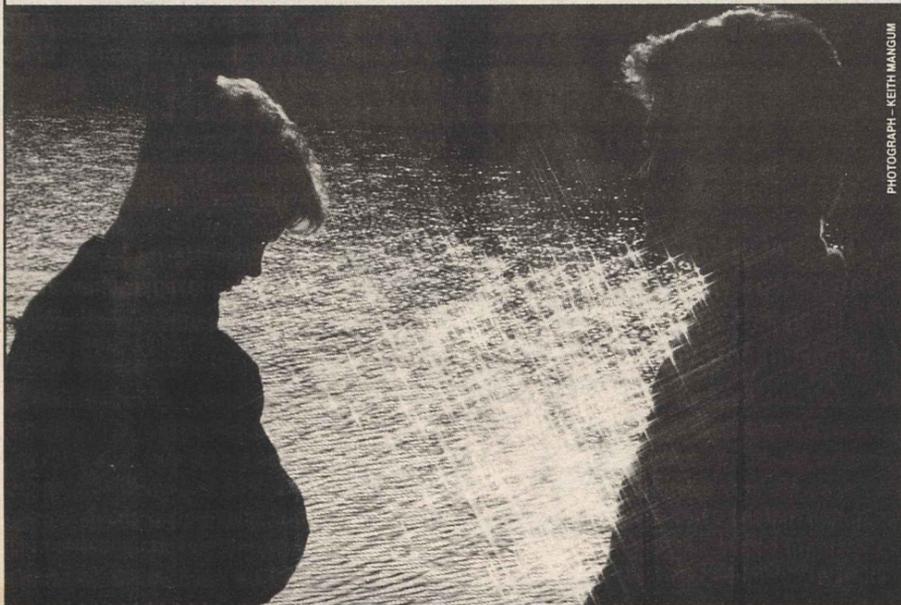


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ALFAs could have devoted more energy toward the organization. She was one of two members to vote against closing at the April 10 meeting.

"People now are looking for some time together as well as work," she said. "Other people were looking for politics, and we weren't doing that either. We were working on the house."

But Fontana disagrees with that idea.

"That's hindsight," she said. "You could also say the house kept ALFA going for as long as it did. We could have disappeared before that if we'd kept renting at McLendon."

Membership had dropped by the time the house was bought, and burnout of the remaining members was growing. The burden of a house—and a mortgage—added to what was already slipping out of sight.

The April 10 vote was not the first time ALFA considered closing. A year and half ago, the membership took the same vote, but with a different result—they voted to continue, and devote more energy into improving ALFA's image, and hopefully, to increase membership. It worked for a time, but new members who came didn't stay, and soon it was the same small group once again.

"I felt [that vote] should have been the end," said Fontana. "At that point, it was clear there weren't enough women, younger women, who wanted to come in a make it something different."

After the vote to keep going, the remaining ALFA members were still fighting an image in the community that said ALFA was not particularly welcoming and complaints that it was adamantly separatist. It was an image that many ALFA members said was at least partially misunderstood.

"I didn't see ALFA the way a lot of the older members saw ALFA," said Annise Barber, a 19-year-old who went to her first ALFA open house on the night of the blizzard last spring. "The image I was getting [from the older members] was a really big political thing. I saw it as women who came together to be friends."

That was vitally important to Barber, who had just come out. At ALFA, she found a place to be among other lesbians, to talk about common interests and share pieces of history. But Barber says she recognizes that ALFA's insistence on its insular existence may have helped hurry the end.

"I think maybe things could have been a little different if they had reached out earlier," she said. "I'm not sure where we went wrong, or even if we went wrong. It's a part of history that's dying."

"It is very cliquish," said Wild Jean. "But there always have been those of us who are congenial. I think we scared people away. I've been there for 12 years, and I still feel on the outside. But I just keep going back, creating

my own space."

But perhaps its subscription to separatist ideals was part of the larger problem with the larger community. Fontana said that the stereotypical image of the "separatist dyke" was only partially true.

"ALFA was a women-only organization, a women-only space, a lesbian-only space," said Fontana. "Everyone agreed to that. But we had people who really did hate men and wouldn't work with them in any circumstances, and women who work with men all the time and don't think they're the enemy. There was a lot of difference in the group."

Separatism, said many women, remains largely misunderstood.

"Some women would come and say 'We're trying to get along in the community,'" said Wild Jean. "I want to also. But I can't be putting all my energy into other things. If we have time together, then when there are issues for us to work on [in the larger community], we can really be there."

No one cause can be said to have pushed ALFA to the point of closing. Times changed, attitudes changed and ALFA remained basically the same lesbian feminist organization it always had been. But women no longer came, and if they did, they rarely stayed. So where did they go?

Coincidentally with the beginning of ALFA's slide, Fourth Tuesday formed. What began as a chance meeting of two lesbians at a business lunch in 1982 turned into a lesbian networking organization of more than 400 members today. The emphasis in the two organizations could not be more different, however, and several ALFA members still believe there is a need for what ALFA once was.

"It's meant a lot to me," said Wild Jean. "We need a support organization. I don't hate men, but I think for women to be able to come out in the world and be with men and women, they need to draw strength from each other."

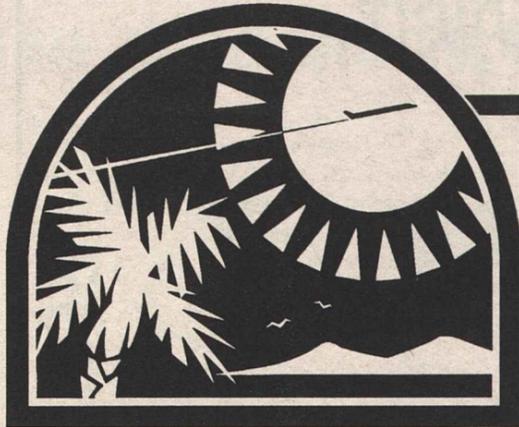
Barber agreed, and added that the history of the lesbian community she gained from her brief year at ALFA was invaluable.

"It's like a part of history is gone, and nobody cared about it," she said. "I don't know how young people can grow up and come out without ever knowing what other lesbians have gone through."

But for others, ALFA's time had come and gone.

"Basically, it was past its time," said Fontana. "Some people still doggedly held onto what it was, but it's clear that more and more people have come out, want to be active but in different things. ALFA was what it was."

And now it's gone. A chance to say goodbye to an old friend comes on June 11, when ALFA's Boogie-wimmin hold the final Azalea Dance at the Existentialist Congregation.



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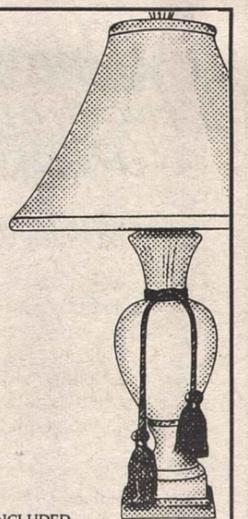
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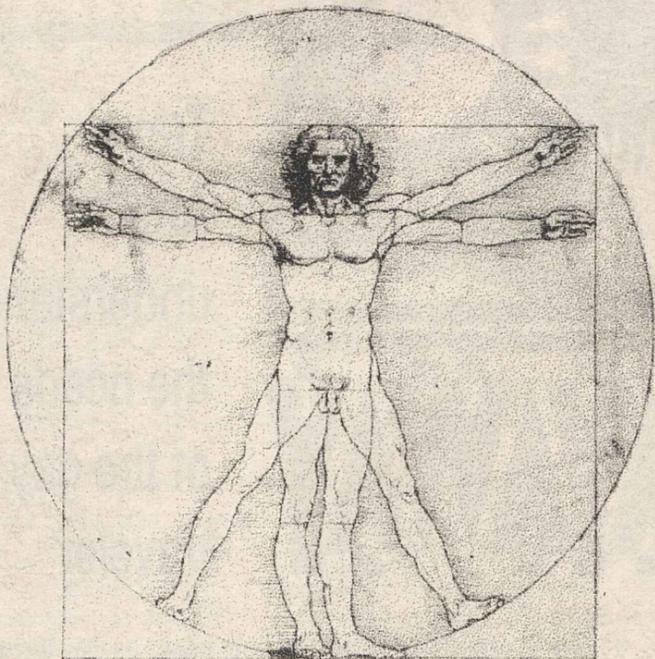
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Kennedy speaks to gay/lesbian and HIV supporters in Atlanta

Atlanta—About 70 members of Atlanta's gay/lesbian and HIV communities gathered last week to meet with one of their most consistent supporters in Congress, U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy.

A reelection fundraiser for the Massachusetts Democrat, who will soon introduce federal civil rights legislation for gays and lesbians, was held at the GLG Grand Hotel in Midtown on April 15.

"I have enormous respect for all of you because the defining aspect of what our society is about is eliminating discrimination in whatever form," said Kennedy, who will soon introduce federal civil rights legislation for gays and lesbians. "We have made progress on race, religion, gender and disability, and we have begun to make progress on the final and most basic aspects and that is in terms of sexual preference."

"It's a continuum. And to make America America, you are on the front lines."

"Senator Kennedy has been one of our very best friends in the U.S. Senate," said host committee member Don George. "And he's very proud to be a sponsor of the gay and lesbian civil rights legislation. That fact alone is worth the money I donated to his reelection today."

Kennedy, who is up for reelection in November, was the only senator on the Armed Services Committee to vote against the plan by the committee's chair, Georgia U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn, to make field visits to military installations which resulted in a distorted and sensationalized view of what would happen if gays were "allowed" in the military. During his speech, Kennedy was philosophic about the resulting policy and supportive of President Clinton.

"In government you often take a small step forward and then you take one back, another forward and another back," he said. "We do have a president, and I know you have questioned it, who is committed. I've been in the room with him and he has spoken passionately and eloquently about this issue."

Kennedy has a long list of actions supportive of the lesbian and gay community. He fought to ensure the inclusion of the gay and lesbian civil rights plank in the 1980 Democratic National Convention and spoke on Clinton's behalf at the gay and lesbian caucus of the 1992 Democratic National Con-



Senator Kennedy and his wife, Vickie, mingled with supporters for about an hour on the 50th floor of the GLG Grand.

vention. He was one of the primary Senate supporters of the appointment of open lesbian Roberta Achtenberg as the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and he sponsored the Ryan White AIDS Care Act which brings money to cities hardest hit by AIDS, and took the lead in the enactment of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Host committee member Caroline Amory says she was not aware of what Kennedy had done for the state of Georgia before her involvement in the fundraiser.

"I was surprised to learn that Georgia gets a lot of money from the Ryan White Act for AIDS services, and it's because of Senator Kennedy," she said. "We wanted to help support him as he has supported us. It was kind of tough to get people to understand he does need money for his reelection campaign and to understand how much he does for our community, not just in Georgia, but throughout the country. I think we got our point across though because we exceeded our goal of reaching \$10,000 for his campaign."

"Peace. We'll win," Kennedy said as he left the room of supporters.

Introduction of the federal gay and lesbian civil rights legislation is expected as soon as this week.

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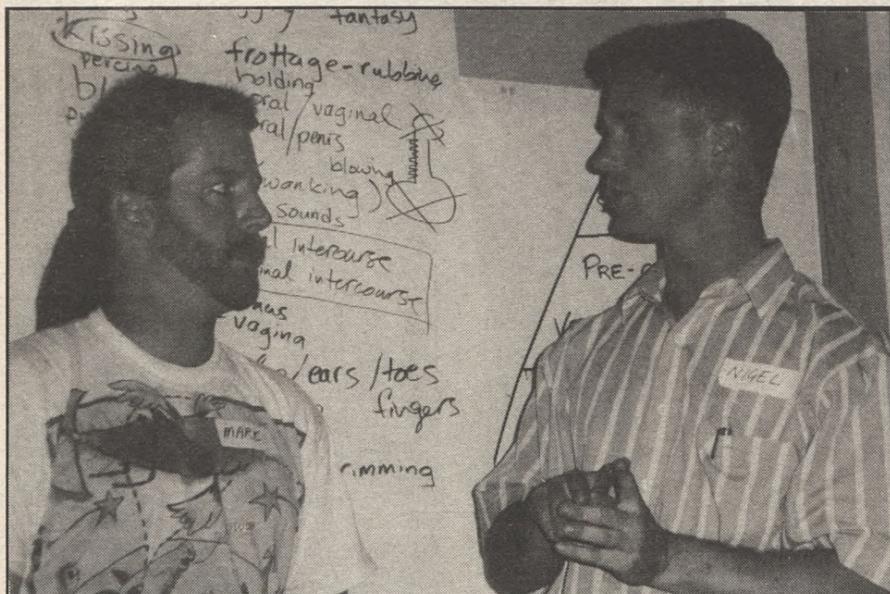
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COVER STORY



Mark du Pont, left, and Nigel Crawhall of the Cape Town AIDS Project conduct a safer sex workshop.

Gay South Africa

Continued from page 1

learn that these seminars were actually against the law and could not be advertised for fear of government (or public) repercussions. It wasn't until the training session at Planned Parenthood that I finally worked with a unique cross-section of the population.

There were men and women from Zulu, from Natal, the Orange Freestate, Johannesburg and the Townships, Cape Town, and from the Western Cape. There were black people, white people and two men of Asian descent. Many languages were spoken in amongst the group, and for many English was the second language. Most of these good people had never attended a seminar or workshop and very few had done much reading on AIDS other than the [biased] articles in the local media.

All of them, however, had the same desire to learn the facts and how to teach them.

We covered leadership skills, facilitator skills and speaking/presentation skills. When they had barely soaked all this in, we began on AIDS—prevention, transmission, treatment, prejudice, etc. I did my thing in English and they translated to a more comfortable language when necessary.

Working until midnight those four nights, we eventually covered everything needed for a good start in AIDS public speaking. Material was faxed from the United States and copied many times. And after everyone had presented their trial seminars and question-and-answer sessions, Nigel and I proclaimed them ready to conquer their worlds.

I left Cape Town the next day not tired, but full of new energy and ready to conquer new projects at home.

As the year passed, I suffered one setback in the form of a brick in my face tossed by a passerby on Peachtree Street at lunch time. However, during my recovery, I was busy writing new material and seminar guides to send across the ocean to my new friends in Africa. They were writing, often telling me of their experiences speaking in small meetings wherever they were welcome. Their experiences were positive and negative and but never dull. However, I noticed a growing trend toward depression and burnout in their letters and decided it was time for a return trip.

In February of this year, I made the long journey back, but this time to a new South Africa. Upon arrival, I was greeted with the news that the new government had fully sanctioned (and funded) all existing AIDS education organizations it could find and had even

supplied these groups with condoms and adapted versions of American and British informative literature. This was a very welcome change from the previous year and made the suitcase full of material I had gathered rather unnecessary.

It may also interest you to know that Cape Town had its first ever gay and lesbian Pride parade and rally in November, just a couple of months before my return. This was also quite a turnaround for the government and for the people, as rallies and assemblies of this nature had historically been greeted with gunfire and grenades. The more than 500 participants were allowed to march peacefully throughout their chosen route to downtown's Greenmarket Square, where an all-day rally and festival was underway.

All of these new-found freedoms began making sense as Robin explained the new government and constitution of South Africa. Apparently, South Africa is now the first country on earth to include gays and lesbians in its Bill of Rights. While the actual laws and ordinances have yet to be written for the enforcement of these rights, they are still there and were used as the basis for obtaining the necessary parade and assembly permits for gay Pride.

I quickly made my way to the offices of The Cape Town AIDS Project to let them know I had arrived. Shane Petzger, the absolutely phenomenal administrative assistant, had made arrangements for a reunion of last year's seminar students at a gay-owned guest farm nestled deep within South Africa's very beautiful wine country. The setting proved to be very relaxing and set the mood for the self-esteem workshop Nigel and I had planned.

As each person arrived, it was like a family reunion. Hugs and kisses and plenty of love from this very diverse group of people.

The weekend was spent exploring the personal and emotional side of AIDS and the person and emotion within each of us as individuals. Many people opened up for the first time about their fears and anxieties concerning AIDS. One man shared his seropositive status (five years) for the first time in public, and many of these people learned real interpersonal communication for the first time. We talked as one group, in small groups and one-on-one for more than two days.

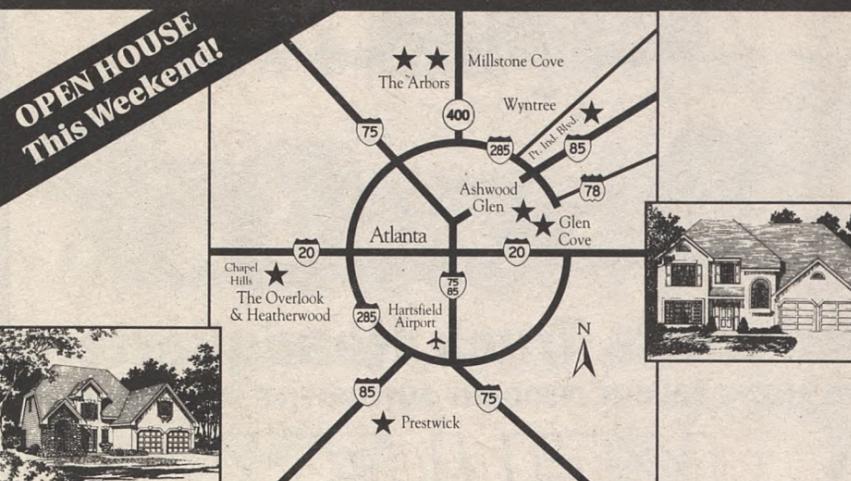
As the weekend drew to a close, we decided to plan some fun activities for the bars and clubs in Cape Town. It was decided we

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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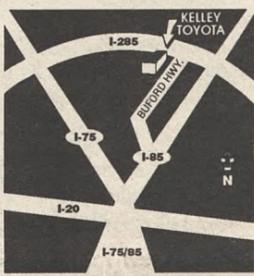
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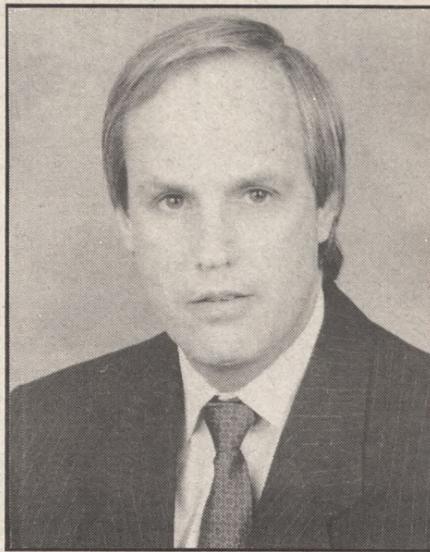
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HIV activist says hope is the key

At an Atlanta town hall meeting, Martin Delaney discusses the latest buzz in the fight against AIDS

by MELISSA CARTER



Martin Delaney

Hope. That was the simple message last week from one of America's best-known HIV/AIDS treatment activists, Martin Delaney.

Delaney, founding director of San Francisco-based Project Inform, one of the nation's most influential AIDS treatment information and advocacy groups, was in Atlanta for a town hall meeting, sponsored by the AIDS Survival Project and AID Atlanta.

The HIV virus is not the only thing to battle, Delaney said, but also the attitude that goes along with being infected.

"We cannot deprive people of their hope in combating this disease," he said, noting how when some are diagnosed with the virus, they lose their hope and let their health deteriorate prematurely.

Malnutrition is wide scale among HIV-positive individuals, so Delaney stressed the importance of a diet specifically geared to each individual's nutrition requirements. Some other areas of general health to be focused on include exercise and plenty of rest, and workload that isn't too demanding. He also urged people to take control of their own situations by reaching out for emotional help and becoming involved in the struggle for progress against HIV disease.

In AIDS research these days, Delaney said the "big buzz" is about protease inhibitors, which interfere with the HIV at an advanced stage, rather than the beginning stages, so that the virus can't duplicate itself, thus becoming inactive.

Though they have received bad press in the past, Delaney said protease inhibitors are

now the subject of large-scale investment by the drug industry.

He said that so far, data shows more progress in the study of battling AIDS with protease inhibitors than with any other treatment. However, these studies, while becoming more wide-scale, are not yet complete.

Other new approaches in the field of research, according to Delaney, include Antisenses, such as a compound called GEM 91, that fight the virus at a molecular level rather than the chemical level. Gene therapy is on the rise as well.

Delaney explained new approaches are geared to deactivating the virus long enough for the immune system to replenish itself, which studies are showing it can do.

But while Delaney reiterated the fact that there has been progress in research, he also stressed the need for a renewal in activism, mostly to gain President Clinton's personal attention to the disease for faster advances in research.

For more information on current medical as well as political breakthroughs, you can write Project Inform at 1965 Market Street, Suite 220, San Francisco, CA 94103.

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Gay South Africa

Continued from page 17

would hold safer-sex parties at the bars, and I even introduced the underwear party concept to them. The bars welcomed these ideas with much enthusiasm and allowed us to hold three parties.

Signs were painted and brochures were copied and the word quickly spread over the gay community in Cape Town. The crowd didn't know how to take us at first, as we paraded around giving out condoms and literature and encouraging them to enjoy safer sex after leaving the bar. In a culture where sex is rarely discussed openly, this was a real eye-opener. We also advertised the regular safer sex workshops at The Project and saw our next workshop jump in attendance from 5 to 20.

The second bar party was the underwear party. Most patrons were shy at first, with only two or three actually participating. However, when we began circulating amongst the crowd in our skivvies, passing out more condoms and more literature, the pants began to drop. Soon everyone was dancing in their underwear and celebrating new attitudes in South Africa. Our DJ even found a copy of New Attitude for our dancing pleasure.

Two weekends later, I found myself at

another guest farm with an entirely different set of people. Robin and I had signed for this farm's wellness weekend, where we planned to relax, sun, and enjoy workshops on meditation and self-healing. There were two women from England, an American woman now living in Cape Town, a man from Cape Town, a man from Germany and two women from the Western Cape. As the weekend progressed, we found ourselves with common denominators of HIV—either in ourselves or in our immediate circle of friends and family.

Once again, my vacation was changed before my eyes as we talked at length with each person in our group. And I began to realize all over again how HIV is touching every life on this planet. No matter where you go or what you do—it is there. And every person should be ready and willing to talk openly about their feelings and concerns about this plague.

In one year, South Africa has taken great strides to control this "suddenly discovered" epidemic. I plan to go back often to help them spread the word. And who knows, maybe some day I will actually have a "real" vacation in that wonderful arid paradise.

Kappers, Cothren honored at Southern Voice awards



DeAundra Peek, Peg and Judy Colbs show off their SoVies.

John Kappers and Charlene Cothren were honored for their outstanding contributions to Atlanta's lesbian/gay community at the second annual Southern Voice Community Awards, held last Saturday night at Zoo Atlanta.

Kappers, president of the board of the AIDS Survival Project was awarded the John Howell Memorial Award, and Cothren, an Atlanta businessperson and African-American lesbian activist, was selected for the Venus Landin Memorial Award. Awards were also given in 14 other categories that were chosen by the readers of Southern Voice in a variety of categories, from "Glamour Goddess of Drag" to "Public Enemy #1."

The goddess was Peg from Etcetera Magazine, while the public enemy award went to the Cobb County Commission.

The Howell award is given annually to someone who has had exhibited continuous and devoted service to the community. Kappers' selection took on an extra emotional dimension because of the decision two weeks ago by a DeKalb County judge to confine him to his home indefinitely. Kappers has multiple drug-resistant tuberculosis and was confined at the request of the DeKalb County Board of Health, even though he has had numerous tests that show his TB is not active or contagious.

Chants of "Free John" broke out several times during the evening. Unable to attend because of the confinement, his award was accepted by his partner, Tim Boyd, his mother, his sister and her partner. Kappers' remarks to the crowd, read by Southern Voice publisher Leigh VanderEls, reduced many of the 400 people on hand to tears.

"Over the years, I have been privileged to witness the compassion and courage of our community," he said. "The many lesbians who adopted AIDS as their own cause, the commitment of lovers and friends and the extreme courage of people with AIDS taught me how fortunate I am to be part of the gay/lesbian community."

"I continue to believe that on some level, I have survived having AIDS in that I have never given control of my life to this virus."

The Landin award is given annually to a person who works to bring together Atlanta's African-American and white gay/lesbian communities. Cothren has served on the board of the Pride committee and the Task Force for

Domestic Partnership and is a member of the Atlanta Lambda Center board, the African-American Lesbian and Gay Alliance and Hospitality Atlanta.

In her remarks, Cothren noted that if she was still here, Landin, a tireless community worker who died last year, would have probably been on hand to set up the tables for the award celebration, dragging along her friends whether they wanted to come or not, and would have found time to go out to Peachtree Street to join in Freaknik festivities.

"I miss my sister Venus," Cothren said.

In the category of "Community Volunteer Extraordinaire," the top vote getters were Joe deRose, who is involved in ACT UP/Atlanta and a number of other groups, and Margie Hewig, who works with the AIDS Survival Project and Interact.

The "Most Community Minded Arts Organization" was SAME, a lesbian/gay arts and media organization. The award for "Excellence in Activism" went to ACT UP/Atlanta.

The Atlanta lesbian/gay community's "Closest Political Ally" was a tie between City Councilwoman Mary Davis and Georgia Sen. Ron Slotin. The "Newest Mover and Shaker" was Mark King, executive director of the AIDS Survival Project.

Chosen as the "Most Welcoming Religious Organization" was the First Metropolitan Community Church. The award for "Excellence in AIDS Activism" went to the AIDS Survival Project.

The top vote-getters in the category of "Most Active Social Organization" were Hospitality Atlanta and Interact. Chosen as "Hippest Heterosexual" was Judy Colbs, president of Atlanta's P-FLAG chapter. In a special presentation, Councilwoman Davis read a proclamation from the City Council that designated Monday, April 25 as Judy Colbs Day in the city of Atlanta in recognition of her work on behalf of human rights.

Chosen as "Business/Professional Person of the Year" was Outwrite Bookstore. The "Most Bodacious Bar" was Backstreet. Chosen as "Most Community Minded Entertainer" was DeAundra Peek.

The Southern Voice awards were a benefit for the Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee and the Atlanta Lambda Center.

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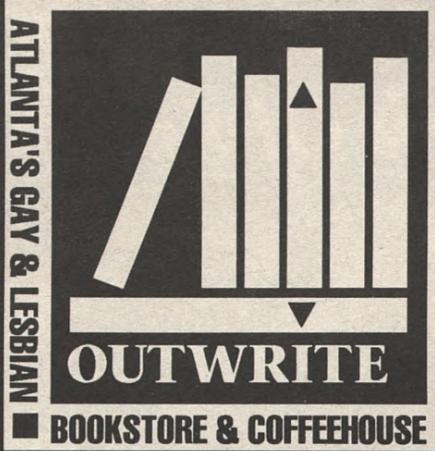
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Black gays and lesbians face more stress, new study finds

Los Angeles—African-American gays and lesbians experience significantly more stress in their lives than either their straight counterparts in the black community or their gay counterparts in the white community, according to a new study by UCLA researchers.

Researchers found that lesbian or bisexual black women suffer more depressive distress, which may include suicidal thoughts, than even a black man infected with HIV. Their national survey of 1,432 gay and lesbian African-Americans found the most stress in black gay men sick with AIDS, with distress scores high enough to hint at probable clinical depression.

The survey's results were published in the April issue of the American Journal of Psychiatry.

Study coauthor Susan D. Cochran said that the 20-question survey cannot diagnose depression. But it gives an indication of chronic strain, "a chronic feeling that life is hard."

The findings were based on levels of depressive distress measured through such indicators as blues, loneliness, fears, physical symptoms, relationship problems and frequency of suicidal thoughts.

The survey of 829 men and 603 women who identified themselves as gay or lesbian showed that they also have substantially higher levels of chronic strain than heterosexual blacks or whites. The comparisons were based on past studies of depressive distress among straight and gay white men and straight blacks of both sexes.

"This study shows that distress and de-

pression are problems that for African-American homosexually active men and women have gone unaddressed. Clearly, homosexually active men and women represent a highly stressed population with specific needs for mental health intervention," said Vickie M. Mays, a UCLA psychology professor and study coauthor.

"We found that this population experiences high degrees of depressive distress, most likely brought on by the combined social stigmas often attached to being African-American, homosexual or both," Mays said.

Sylvia Rhue, a Los Angeles clinical social worker, said she's heard the triple whammy of racism, sexism and homophobia discussed among black lesbians.

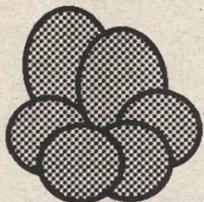
"It's not because we're lesbian, gay and black that we have higher levels of psychiatric dysfunction but because we have so many things put upon us by being lesbian, gay and black," Rhue said.

"Let's look at the economic factors that cause stress and depression. If you're female, you statistically make less than a man. If you're black, you make statistically less than white people. If you're gay, you can be fired at any second and potentially have fewer opportunities if you're out of the closet," she said.

And, 33 percent of black lesbians also face the stresses of being mothers, she said.

The study was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

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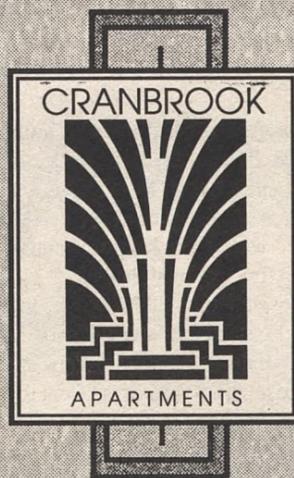
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Skater Curry dies at 44

Stratford upon Avon, England—John Curry, who revolutionized figure skating and won the gold medal at the 1976 Winter Olympics, died last week at 44.

His agent told the media that Curry's death the result of a heart attack, was related to complications from AIDS. The skater had disclosed in 1991 that he had AIDS and that he was gay, bringing out into the open issues the figure skating community seemed reluctant to deal with.

Curry, who infused his skating with dance, is considered a revolutionary who changed the sport forever.

"He represented a milestone in skating," Curry's former coach, Carlo Fassi, told the Associated Press. "He completely changed skating, turning it into a real art. This is a painful loss for the skating world."

Dick Button, the men's Olympic champion of 1948 and 1952 and a commentator for ABC, said yesterday in a statement that Curry was "the finest and most intelligent all-around skater I've ever seen. He skated with a combination of superior athleticism, solid technique, classical line and musical sensitivity. And he was choreographically inventive."

"I think he brought the purest form of ballet to the ice," Olympic champion Peggy Fleming told the New York Times in an interview. "He was a real purist, totally devoted to the art of skating. He also had the technique and athleticism to make that art look effortless. It was a wonderful blend of what skating is about—art and sport. It's a huge loss."

Born in Birmingham, England, in 1949, Curry wanted to become a ballet dancer. But that was opposed by his father, and he turned to skating at age 7.

In 1973, Curry, then the British national champion, moved to Colorado to train with Fassi, who had coached Fleming to the gold medal in 1968. He won the gold at the 1976 Olympic Games in Innsbruck, Austria.

As a professional skater after the Olympics, Curry continued to explore alternate forms of skating, bringing his acclaimed "Ice Dancing" show to Broadway in 1977-78 and later touring with his revolutionary John Curry Skating Company. He disdained the standard glitzy ice shows, once telling an interviewer that he "never could see the point of spending 12 years training to go dress up in a Bugs Bunny suit."

During the 1980s, Curry lived in New York. He says he contracted HIV in 1987. By 1991, he had developed AIDS, and he returned to England from New York to live with his mother.

In 1992, Curry told The London Daily Mail that he felt "ashamed" at having contracted HIV. Later, he came out publicly as a gay man in a letter to the same newspaper.

"I just accept being homosexual as the way I am. I don't think of it as being bad or wrong or to do with any form of illness. I never pretended not to be homosexual, ever," he said.

Speaking of HIV, Curry wrote, "I think the more open people are, the easier it gets for everybody else because it demystifies it. I don't want others to be frightened like I was, and I want people to understand the importance of safe sex. After all, no one is immune."

Curry is survived by his mother.

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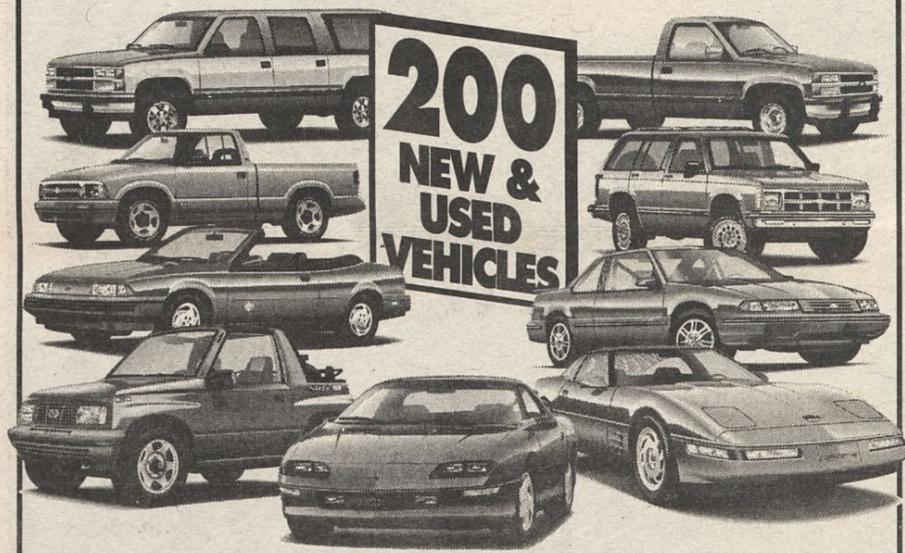
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OCCASIONS

BIRTHDAYS

Happy 32nd birthday to Frances Carpenter on April 29.

George Knott celebrated his 35th birthday on April 26.

Mitch Morrow, treasurer of Interact Atlanta and a member of Congregation Bet Haverim, will be celebrating the third anniversary of his 39th birthday on April 29.

A very happy 50th birthday to Ann Bowers, also on April 29.



A new job for Alicia Culver

EMPLOYMENT

Congratulations go out to Alicia Culver of the AIDS Survival Project on her new title—associate director. Alicia was also a SoVie award nominee for Hippest Heterosexual.

When you've got a special occasion, send it to Southern Voice/Occasions, PO Box 18215, Atlanta, GA 30316, call (404) 876-0789, or fax to (404) 876-2709. Please include a phone number for verification.

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Freedom Marching Band will debut at Pride

The Atlanta Freedom Marching Band will debut at the 1994 Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade June 12. Director Buz Carr says, "We decided after last year's Pride that a parade with 100,000 people and floats needed a marching band too, and we all wanted the chance to play in a band again."

The band welcomes new members. All in-

struments are needed and all levels of experience are welcome. For more information about rehearsals or about the band, please call 872-9763.

Band sponsors include Craig Teasdale, D.C., Ansley Beach, Inman Animal Hospital, Burkhardt's and First Metropolitan Community Church.

Hollywood Hots seeks volunteers for '94 show

Hollywood Hots, the AIDS fundraiser, is gearing up for its 1994 show. Hollywood Hots is a cabaret under the stars that features some of the Southeast's finest entertainment. This year's event will be held Sept. 10 and will be behind the Heretic on Cheshire Bridge Road. The theme will be that of a U.S.O. tour.

The show is currently looking for volunteers for all areas of the production, including

people to help build the stage and to help with fundraisers throughout the summer. Call (404) 321-3983 for more information, or write to Hollywood Hots, 3267 Buford Highway, N.E., Room 720-308, Atlanta, GA 30329 for a volunteer application.

This year's Hollywood Hots will benefit AIDS Survival Project and Jerusalem House.

Hosts needed for AIDS Survival Project's PWArties

Have fun, meet new friends and make a difference by helping AIDS Survival Project, formerly the Atlanta Chapter of the National Association of People with AIDS, with their parties for people with HIV and AIDS.

The first and third Saturday of each month, the AIDS Survival Project hosts parties for people living with HIV and people who are

"HIV friendly." These are known in the community as "PWArties."

There is an immediate need for volunteers to coordinate these parties. Duties would include planning activities, greeting PWArtiers, setting up and cleaning up. If you can help, please call Liz England at (404) 874-7926.

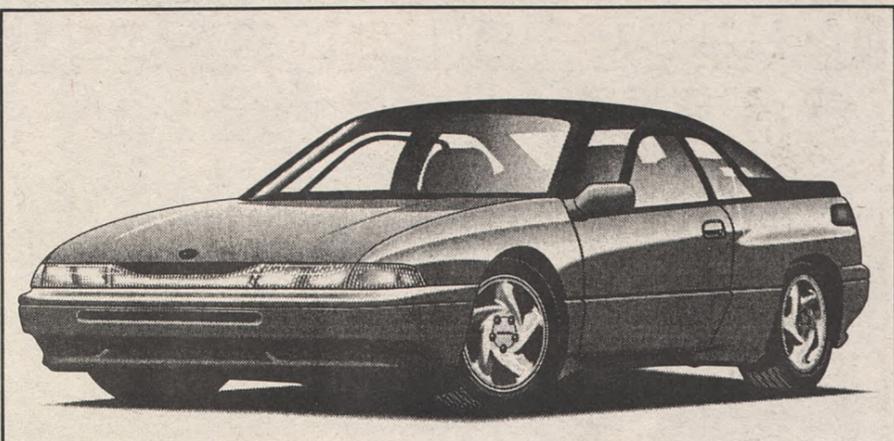
AID Atlanta will host open house on May 5

The next Open House at AID Atlanta will be held Thursday, May 5, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at 1438 W. Peachtree Street.

The AID Atlanta Open House is an opportunity to see how AID Atlanta operates. Volunteers and staff from the agency's various

programs will be present to talk about the agency, its programs and the different volunteer opportunities available.

For more information, call the AID Atlanta office at 872-0600.



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Photo by Mike Nelson

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