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## Movie Review

by Sarah Dreher

Theater Too in Montpelier presented Alumnae News: The Doris Day Years by Sarah Dreher. The evening's entertainment was a wonderfully touching but light-hearted depiction of three college classmates from Wellesley looking back ten years later. It is a story of hopes and dreams, of fears, and of the search for identity in a world stressing conformity.

Karen, a very bright, and lesbian, English student transferred to Wellesley College that year and there she met Stacey and Stacey's roommate Terry. Stacey is taken with Karen's optimism and vision and the two schoolmates often stay up late discussing dreams of their futures. Terry, taken only with the Wellesley tradition, worries that Stacey might be "led astray" by Karen.

Alumnae News is set in the 1960's, ten years after the trio have graduated, with flashbacks to their college days. As the play progresses we learn that ten years ago Terry went to the Dean with tales of Karen's

Last month's OITM reporters wish to share their identity with curious readers. We inadvertently left off bylines on articles in November's issue.

Legislative Corner - Susan Aranoff  
MOW Revitalizes Vermont Contingent - Carrie Coy  
UU Religious Group Forms - Michael Ferrell  
Book Review: Now That You Know - Anita  
Love and Life to Us All - Walter Zeichner  
The Wedding - Anita  
MOW Commentary - Philip Roberts  
MOW thoughts (in italics) - Sarah Coy  
1st National S/M Conference Held - Gilles Yves Bonneau  
Vermont Coalition Report - Holly Perdue

lesbianism. Stacey is warned by the Dean not to "hang around" with Karen anymore. Karen is deeply hurt by the sudden, mysterious, departure of her friend. The players are easy to empathize with and the audience is carried back to a time when the "L"-word was not spoken and the mere accusation meant ostracism.

Alumnae News was performed on Friday and Saturday nights, November 6 and 7. Lis Brook as Karen, Leslie Jennings as Stacey, and Becca Brown as Terry did a very convincing performance. The set was simple with only some sparse furniture placed on opposite ends of the stage. The hall, in the basement of Montpelier's Unitarian Universalist Church, was small and noisy at times but the play, directed by Nancy McAvoy and Sarah Dreher and produced by Fran Czajkowski, easily carried our imaginations back to a time when we were young and friendships were magic and I was not so sure of my sexual-orientation.

## Book Review

### PLAGUE:

#### A NOVEL ABOUT HEALING

by Toby Johnson

250 pp. \$7.95

Alyson Publications

Toby Johnson knows how to spin a good yarn, and he does just that in PLAGUE: A Novel About Healing. The plot is original and interesting but not always believable. In fact, the plot is the book's strong point and also its weakest. Mr. Johnson, in his haste to get the novel published, sold out to expediency. Interviewed here in Burlington, Johnson's response was, "it doesn't take very long to write a book, once you get started."

The story line, while intriguing and at times even gripping, does not achieve its full potential. PLAGUE was given a premature birth and would have been a much better product if it had received more development.

The story revolves around AIDS; it enjoys an interesting twist, however, in that

both the cause of AIDS and its cure are controlled by "The Liberty Bell Foundation," a thinly veiled disguise of the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. This "right wing think tank" harbors such a loathing for homosexuals and all things to the left of the Spanish Inquisition that it is not impossible to believe that it would actually undertake just such an endeavor.

It all begins in Africa where the Foundation is trying to develop new types of germ warfare that can be turned off when the battle or war is over. The experiment goes awry when animals escape from the laboratory and the disease begins to spread. Not to worry, though, because the researchers have an antidote that is 100% effective. However, they refuse to release it because "we have a responsibility to God to rid the world of homosexuals," which they believe this disease can do. This, of course, is all kept very secret by the Foundation.

There are several interesting subplots in this book which are fun to follow.

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However, the problem of plot under-development mentioned earlier, keeps cropping up. In the end, they are hysterically brought together on one page, all too neatly tied-up in a knot and presented as a gift to the reader. One would like to see these characters and their stories made whole.

The main character in the book is a psychotherapist. He is portrayed as a gentle, loving volunteer in the battle against AIDS, and he believes that suicide is an acceptable alternative for Persons With AIDS to consider. This is the most objectionable part of this otherwise decent novel. This book strongly suggests that suicide somehow equates to "death with dignity" and this premise is subliminally reinforced over and over again. There have been too many trying to dictate to Lesbians and Gay men how to live and die for us to start creating our own literary devils and making heroes out of them.

Still, Mr. Johnson's book is one of hope. The ending is particularly delightful, leaving you with several plausible alternatives as to just what really did happen.