

SECTION
EMONDAY
APRIL 29, 1990

HIGHLIGHTS

THOMPSON CHARGES: Hunter S. Thompson says the sexual assault and drug charges filed against him are the result of a witch hunt led by a prosecutor who disapproves of the writer's lifestyle. E1

HARD LESSON: Professor Walter Capps' class, "Voices of the Stranger," has featured veterans talking about Vietnam, a former Beirut hostage, and Soviet soldiers in full regalia. Today's lesson is Bill White, who is nearing the end of his battle with AIDS. E1

'MEDIA WATCH': The issue of child care took the spotlight at a day-long "Media Watch: Women and Men" symposium. E1

R.S.V.P.: Second City Theater became Club Med for a benefit for FOCUS, a group opposed to malathion spraying... Dance Gallery was on its toes after hearing that a dance facility finally will be built... and the party after "The Cocktail Hour" really had them talking. E3

BOOK REVIEW: To enjoy Cathleen Schine's new novel "To the Birchhouse," writer-reviewer Carolyn See, "you have to buy into the idea that all of us are terminally weird." But once you do, you're in for a treat. E4

NEWSMAKERS



Hepburn

■ **Hepburn** Writes: After years of reluctance, actress **Katharine Hepburn** has decided to tell all about her legendary life, publisher Alfred A. Knopf announced Friday. Knopf and Ballantine Books have jointly acquired world publishing rights to the actress's work, to be published in hardcover in 1991. Describing her decision to write the book now, Hepburn said, "It's later than you think."

■ **Keith Remembered:** Artist **Keith Haring** will be remembered in a two-hour memorial service on May 4 at New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine. About 400 invitations were sent out by the Haring Foundation, but the service is open to the public. Speakers will include actor **Dennis Hopper**, actress **Anne Magnuson**, art critic **Jeffrey Deitch**, art dealer **Tom Sharfazi** and artist **Kenny Scharf**. Haring died of AIDS on Feb. 16 at age 31.



Fowler

■ **Elephant Love:** **Betsy Fowler**, wife of **Jim Fowler**, Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom co-star, has done a series of paintings to help fight the extinction of the African elephant. Fowler took up the animals' cause after living among a herd during her husband's research in Kenya, she said last week at a reception in Omaha, Neb. Fowler and her husband, a naturalist and conservationist, formed the Fowler Wildlife Assn. to help save the endangered species. She is selling prints of her work, with part of the proceeds going to help **Richard Lenkey**, director of Kenya's Department of Wildlife, to curb the poaching of elephants.

■ **AIDS Quilt in D.C.:** Millions of Americans saw the commemorative AIDS quilt in its nationwide tours. But Rep. **Gerry Studds**, (D-Mass.), was sure most members of Congress hadn't seen it. So Studds and California Democrats **Barbara Boxer**, **Nancy Pelosi** and **Henry Waxman** got authorization from the Speaker of the House to display the quilt, starting today in the Rotunda of the domed entrance to the Congressional Office Building in Washington.

—Compiled by Bettijane Levine

INDEX

Abby	E4
Ann Landers	E7
Astrology	E5
Bridge	E6
Comics	E5, E6, E7
Dr. Joyce Brothers	E6

Gonzo Time

Hunter Thompson, Facing Drug, Sexual Assault Charges, Claims He's the Victim of Witch Hunt

By DAN MORAIN
TIMES STAFF WRITER

WOODY CREEK, Colo.—It is, as the Doctor might say, a nasty little tale. It's a story of naked lust or maybe vicious treachery. Either way, it's tawdry to the bone. The doctor, a.k.a. Hunter S. Thompson, is the eccentric bestselling author who has been a cultural icon to political junkies and college students for 20 years with his commentaries and tales of wild living and drug abuse.

But at age 52, the man whose life is the inspiration for the maniacal character, Duke, in the Doonesbury comic strip, finds himself enmeshed in a most uncomfortable situation. It's one Thompson himself might have conjured up, but only in a particularly crazed moment.

It began one night, back in February, when he consented to meet a woman named Gail Palmer-Slater at his a log-built house, 8,000 feet up in the Rockies, a few miles from Aspen. Palmer-Slater, 35, had sent him from her Michigan home an introductory letter, said to have included a tape of a pornographic video she once produced.

Thompson was with a few friends when she arrived. As the night wore on and two of Thompson's friends left, she told authorities later, Thompson suggested that she join him in his hot tub. When she declined, she said, he flung his vodka and cranberry juice at her in a rage, then grabbed her left breast and twisted hard.

"Get [her] out of here," he shouted, using profane terms to his assistant, Palmer-Slater told law enforcement. The woman ran to the porch and a cab was called. Early that morning, she told authorities her story.

Three days later, on Feb. 28, a team of investigators from the office of Milton Blakey, the district attorney in Colorado's 9th Judicial District, pulled up, armed with a search warrant, looking for evidence of the assault and, of

Please see E THOMPSON, E8

Child Care Issue Dominates 'Media Watch' Session

By MICHAEL QUINTANILLA
TIMES STAFF WRITER

When Meredith Vieira, 36, replaced Diane Sawyer and joined CBS' "60 Minutes" television show last year, she took the most important guy in her life to her contract negotiations: her baby boy Ben.

That astute move, showing her new employers "where my priorities are," threw her soon-to-be boss "totally" though for her it was a breakthrough in trying to balance career and family concerns, Vieira told participants at a weekend symposium on men, women and the media.

Her scenario illustrated a point most participants at a day-long "Media Watch: Women and Men" symposium at USC agreed on: that serious concerns remain for women about the media, both as a workplace and a force shaping their lives and society.

More than 70 people—most women, few minorities—attended Saturday's conference sponsored by Women, Men and Media, a USC-based research and outreach project headed by author and professor Betty Friedan and Gannett News Service chief Nancy Woodhull. The project, underwritten by a \$100,000 Gannett Foundation grant, seeks to monitor gender-based issues in the media.

At the weekend sessions, many women expressed concern that child care—and not the range of issues planned for discussion—dominated when many of the high-profile, high-powered media women shared stories.

Jennifer Siebens, Los Angeles manager of the CBS news

Please see MEDIA, E4

Ball, Book and Black Tie: An Opportunity to Read

As one who attends a good many black-tie banquets, I was delighted recently to receive an invitation to "The Stay Home and Read a Book Ball."

This "novel event," as they called it, is sponsored by the Los Angeles Library Assn. (LALA), which has supported the Los Angeles Public Library since 1872. The invitation requested "the pleasure of your company... Thursday, the 28th of April, at any time o'clock wherever you are."

In a separate letter I was invited to autograph two of my books to be used as door prizes. I didn't know how there could be door prizes to an event that had no door, but I complied.

One of the signatories of the letter was Nancy Dannevik, liaison for LALA's authors advisory committee. I phoned her and asked her how the ball worked.

She explained, quite accurately, that when you go to a real ball you have to "wear a tuxedo and uncomfortable shoes and eat rubber chickens." And you spend a lot of money, most of which goes for food and valet parking and a ballroom and janitorial service. Not a lot gets through to the cause.

JACK SMITH

This way, she pointed out, your contribution goes directly to the cause, with a minimum of overhead, and you stay home in comfort and read a book.

She said the Writers Guild was cooperating with LALA. Its mailing list, "After all," she said, "movies are very popular, and where do the writers go to get ideas for their scripts? Books."

She couldn't be more right. Think of the wonderful movies that have come directly from books. "The Bible," for one. What screenwriter could have turned that one out "without divine assistance? What about "The Ten Commandments"? We'd never have seen Charlton Heston part the Red Sea if it hadn't been for Exodus. Even such pseudo-historical movies as "Gone With the Wind" have come from books, and such science-fiction classics as "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea." And don't forget "Les

Miserables."

The Stay at Home and Read a Book Ball will give many of us a chance to read those books we've always meant to read but never had the time for. I may take another crack at "A Brief History of Time" by Stephen Hawking, which is supposed to be accessible to the layman, but which I found rather intimidating the first time out.

Also standing patiently on my shelf—but there with the most honorable of intentions—are "The Blind Watchmaker: Why the evidence of evolution reveals a universe without design" by Richard Dawkins, and "Infinite in All Directions" by Freeman Dyson. I have made several passes as these books, but somehow I always end up reading a detective novel by Robert B. Parker or Elmore Leonard.

I think I'm pretty well up on Jane Austen. I try to read one of her books every year. There is something very modern about Jane. She is a true progenitor of Jacqueline Briskin and other contemporary women authors. On the other hand, I may read one of the classics that I missed as a boy; perhaps "The Last of the Mohicans"

by James Fenimore Cooper. What a chance to fill in a blank spot in my education!

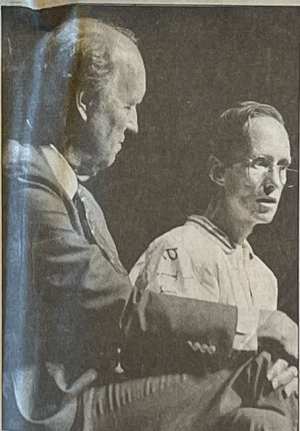
The other night we saw a movie on TV called "Major League" about a baseball player who was getting his second chance in the majors. But he had lost his girlfriend because she was a librarian and he had never even read "Moby Dick." We see him on the team plane reading "Moby Dick." So it's only a comic book version. At least it's a book. (He gets the girl back.)

There is nothing to keep one from rereading old favorite. A really good book is better the second time. I may have a second go at Fitzgerald's "This Side of Paradise," which I liked much better than Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises." Or I might go back to one of Peter De Vries' comic classics, like "Comfort Me With Apples."

That's what the Stay at Home and Read a Book Ball is all about. You stay home and you read a book. Any book. Meanwhile, you pay for the privilege by making a contribution to LALA, P.O. Box 7147, Los Angeles, Calif. 90071. You have until May 15 to qualify for a door prize.



The real-life Hunter Thompson, shown in court appearance; and, left, the character he inspired in Doonesbury



KEN LUBAS / Los Angeles Times

Walter Capps, left, sat next to Bill White while he spoke to Capps' class. The professor hoped White's visit would help students better understand AIDS.

'Why Can't I Die Now?'

■ **Education:** Bill White is losing his fight against AIDS. He tells his story to an unusual class at UC Santa Barbara.

By IRENE LACHER
TIMES STAFF WRITER

In the first image, Bill White appears robust. His thick brown hair curls over his ears. His smile is wry and appealing. This image is two-dimensional, all lights and faded colors projected onto a large screen.

In the second image, White is three-dimensional, but he is pale and gaunt. It is difficult to believe only one year has passed since the first image was recorded. White is sitting on a folding chair in front of the screen.

White, retired church organist, musicologist and AIDS patient, is today's lesson here at UC Santa Barbara. The course, Interdisciplinary Studies 150, "Voices of the Stranger." The professor, Walter Capps. The point: Real life. Capps was inspired by the writings of Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk who died in 1968. "He says the truth comes to us in three ways—sacred texts, in our own hearts and most profoundly in the voice of the stranger, the person from whom you wouldn't expect to receive the truth."

Capps' specialty is ivory-tower-felling, reality-pounding courses. He made a name for himself as the architect of a course on the Vietnam War; it drew on the personal

Please see CLASS, E2

CLASS: Real-Life AIDS Lesson Taught

Continued from E1
 testimony of veterans and has been copied by 300 schools across the country. For his latest course, during nearly 900 students in its third year to the largest auditorium on campus, Capps has enlisted a blind geography professor, a former hostage in Beirut and Soviet soldiers tromping down lecture hall aisles in full regalia.



KEN LUBAS / Los Angeles Times

After his talk, White spoke with students in the class. Said one: "A friend said most classes are science and math. This was life."

White, whom Capps knew from Grace Lutheran Church in Santa Barbara, was already a member of the professor's unlikely crew of lecturers. He talked to the students last year, when he was in the early stages of his illness and still fairly upbeat. When Capps saw White at church on Easter Sunday, White's health was visibly—dramatically—worse. The professor invited him to speak again.

"He said, 'I was afraid you wouldn't ask,'" says Capps, a distinguished, graying professor. "Monday morning his mother called. She said, 'If you want him to speak, do it this week. I've never seen him this bad.' We hit on this compromise: I would play the tape [of White's talk last year]. If he could come, fine. If he couldn't, we had the tape."

During his illness, White, 35, has found his mission in speaking engagements aimed at all those people who believed they could never get AIDS. And White says he believes Capps' invitation will be his last forum. So he "trained" for his final public appearance by resting, hearing his rapidly diminishing strength. The professor's job was to stick close by White's side on stage—doctor's orders—so if White's words slurred or his mind wandered, Capps could grab the microphone.

The lesson White offered a year ago was that favorite of humanists and novelists: "Life has meaning, and the forces of life are stronger than the forces of death," in Capps' words. But this time, as White edges closer to death, his message has changed: White's pronouncements about willing himself well are giving way to dark and intermittent bouts of anxiety.

The professor hopes White's appearance will lend a human face to a national blight that can be paralyzingly abstract, especially for the young, "so that when they think about AIDS, they won't think 'national problem,' they'll think 'Bill White.'"

By the time White finishes, the students are on their feet, applauding in admiration and, in some cases, weeping for White's pain.

"A friend said most classes are science and math," says Anna Johnson, 21. "This was life."

First Image: Bill White in 1989
 These are some of the comments White made to the class a year ago. "I used to teach voice in the music department at UCSB for three years. Then I got my doctorate [at the University of Texas] and was underemployed for a year. The day after I sent in my first rough draft of my dissertation, I decided maybe I should go to the doctor and see about my T cells. Those are the cells in your body that can keep your immune system going. I found out that I had 19 of them, which isn't very many. One person I know said he knew people with such few T cells they all had names."

"I had known for a year and a half... that I had tested positive in the AIDS antibody test, and I wasn't taking very good care of that... I lost 40 or 50 pounds, and I developed an amazing cough for four or five months. And in collu-



KEN LUBAS / Los Angeles Times

"The truth comes to us in three ways—sacred texts, in our own hearts and most profoundly in the voice of the stranger, the person from whom you wouldn't expect to receive the truth."

WALTER CAPPUS

that's supposed to do to my vocal chords. But as a trained singer, that sounds to me like a lousy diagnosis.

"I have cancer in my right leg, which causes the lymph systems not to work very well, and so it swells up with all this fluid it can't get rid of. Right now we're using the very modern technique of wrapping my leg so tight, it can't swell up. Very medieval. Leeches are probably going to be next, but if it works, I'm not going to complain."

"I take the famous drug AZT you've probably heard about, the antiviral drug trying to fight this virus. I can only take a third of the recommended dosage... I still become anemic with the third dosage, and I need blood transfusions every three weeks."

One of the greatest changes in White's life was "learning not to get excited and hysterical about what might happen. I might be a paper next month, but I'm going to Europe this month. And I might be very sick next month and I might get sick when I'm in Europe, but I'm not going to get excited about it unless it happens to me."

"I've also found that the spiritual, metaphysical help I need to cope with my physical problems has

come to me. When I was diagnosed, I was feeling very alone... I found at the [county] clinic a whole network of people ready to help me physically and spiritually deal with a life-threatening illness... I was thinking of suicide, which I think everyone who's facing this does, if only for a brief moment. I think I would have botched it and had a dysfunctional brain, and that would even be worse."

"I went to a friend's house the next day and for some reason I cried in the car. I'm a threat on the road... I couldn't stop crying... It finally hit me what was going on, that this [coming to grips with AIDS] is a process that takes a while."

"I started talking to my friend, and a book had come into her hand that week, when I was dealing with the possibility of having AIDS. It's a booklet by a woman named Louise Hay, who is a metaphysical teacher and counselor... It talked all about the self and forgiveness and letting go of past fears and... creating our own healing, creating through loving thought our own happiness and not worrying about what our family may think."

"She talked about loving healing and whatever spiritual power it is, whatever you want to call it."

"Some people may say it's a coincidence that those words came to me on that specific day, but it's not a coincidence. Something is taking care of me. I have a priest friend who would tell me that's the Virgin Mary. We used to chuckle at that and say, 'Isn't that old-fashioned?' but the Virgin Mary is also a marvelous, loving, nurturing kind of image that I've learned to use when I need to be held by my mother, who's 2,000 miles away."

"If I die from this condition, I trust that I will do it in a fashion where I can cope. I'm not going to go kicking and screaming, frightened, away. I don't think that's in my store for me. I think I can learn enough beforehand to accept that time and that moment."

"The virus itself is a very weak virus. If it were sitting here it would last 20 seconds and it would die. That is nothing to be afraid of... Your life is so much stronger than AIDS or any virus can imagine to be. We have to believe that, and it's not being flippant. It's not being pseudo-religious. It's true. The power of good in this universe is more powerful than anything else. It's when we give in to our fears that what we consider evil takes over."

"Every 30 minutes in the United States, someone dies of AIDS, and that someone may be dying alone without the support of their family because they're ashamed of being gay, or they're drug addicts and their families have left them alone."

or they're a straight college student who thought it would never happen to them and they're ashamed. These people need our help. I need your help. And, God forbid, but perhaps you may need my help someday."

Second Image: Bill White in 1990

And these are some of the things White said this year.
 "I can only speak for a short moment, but what I would say now is not the same as what I said last year. I'm not nearly as cheery because I feel lonely. My parents and I are moving into a community so we can have time together."

"While I feel a lot of respect [for Louise Hay and her philosophy... [and] she's kept a lot of people from beating up on themselves, and smiling and being positive is not going to save my life. I've had some major anxiety attacks trying to plan my life."

"I've lost a lot of mobility. I still have my Datsun, but it's in my father's name, and I wouldn't drive that thing to save my life. I have no sight in my left eye, and my legs aren't working so well. It really upsets me to be constantly asking for favors, from my parents especially and anybody else who might be around."

"I spent most of my life planning for when I was going to be all right. That in itself kept me from doing things. I never could sing, because I was so afraid it wasn't going to be right. I never allowed my heart to sing, and the few times I did allow that were the best times."

"Things happen correctly. They happen the way we want them to. They happen for the best. They happen the way God wants them to."

"A lot of the things I thought were very important—being able to travel, being independent, being able to do all those things on my own—are no longer important. I will sit in my recliner, and if somebody will bring me food, it will be wonderful."

"When I'm having an anxiety attack, I'm completely out of control... I went to the hospital because my kidneys clogged up, and I needed surgery to unblock them, excruciating pain. And all I really wanted was to die and to get out of that pain. And I kept saying to everyone, 'But why can't I die now?' And you can't. You can't just say, 'OK, let's die.' If you have something that still goes on in your head that you want to do, whether it's to see your mother one more time, or see your grandkids for a short period of time, you have to figure out a way to do that. God will help you do that."

"Because nothing could ever replace dancing, they replaced my hip."

JACQUI LANDRUM,
HIP REPLACEMENT SURGERY
APRIL 1989.

"I'm a professional dancer and dancing is my life. And for a long time, I denied that the pain I felt in my hip was bad enough to require surgery."
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Judith Jamison, left, Lullaby Gallery lunch, hail the new...

FOCUS

By KEVIN ALLMAN

The Second City Theatre in Santa Monica became Club Medly on Thursday night when it was a benefit for FOCUS (Focus on the Opposed to Chemical Ban Spraying). People posed to aerial malat spraying paid \$30 to see and City's new revue, "of the Medflies," as well as listen to speeches by politicians.

But not every politician was there. Mayor Tom Bradley's office turned down invitation, said FOCUS president Adelaide Nimitz. Sen. Herschel Rosenthal (Los Angeles) (who called spraying "idiotic" and had a lawsuit against George Deukmejian in of stopping it) showed however, as well as representatives sent by state Sen. Torres (D-Los Angeles) and L.A. City Councilman Wachs.

Proceeds from the event will fund FOCUS' malat hot line and related costs. FOCUS raised additional money by selling T-shirts and bumper stickers with T-malathion sentiments. A popular item was a shirt with a picture of Deukmejian and the legend, "The Duk Hazard."

A refresh reception everyone a chance to celebrity supporter's snack on guacamole Goldfish crackers.

On hand were Ed Be Jr., Robert Blake, Harris Ramis, Billy Crystal, Ratzemberger of "Cheer Soleil Moon Frye of "P Brewer" and Henry Po of "Webster." The show included with an improv comedy set featuring second City's most alumni, including Shonda Martin and Joe F...

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