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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee  
460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
(615) 244-2355W. C. Fields, Director  
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor  
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

## BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
 DALLAS Richard T. McCartney, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996  
 MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461  
 NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) L. Bracey Campbell III, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2798  
 RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151  
 WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4228

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Travel Restricted But  
Missionary Morale High

TOCCOA, Ga. (BP)--The morale of Southern Baptist missionaries in Rhodesia is high even though their travel is considerably restricted in outlying areas because of guerrilla activity, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board official has reported.

Davis L. Saunders, secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa who has just returned from a tour of his area, told of conditions in Rhodesia during a session of the annual Furloughing Missionaries Conference. The meeting was held in Toccoa, June 8-11, preceding the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Rhodesian missionaries hope that present attempts for internal settlement of the country's problems will work, Saunders said.

The area secretary believes that the political turmoil which many African countries are experiencing often makes their people even more responsive to the gospel than under normal conditions.

But missionaries are having to make changes, he said. This year the Rhodesian missionaries were advised to hold their annual meeting at a Gwelo hotel rather than at the Baptist camp outside the city. Outlying areas are more vulnerable to attack.

Southern Baptist missionaries Eugene and Reva Milby of Kentucky, a Rhodesian missionary couple attending the meeting in Georgia, said their work at Plumtree, Rhodesia, is only two miles from the Botswana border and less than 20 miles from the area where two Roman Catholic missionaries were reported killed in a recent attack by anti-government forces.

The Milbys, who returned to the United States on furlough May 5, said the kidnapping of more than 400 children and teachers from a Methodist mission school at the end of March occurred just five miles outside Plumtree.

Botswana authorities released all but 28 of the school group two days later after each had been asked whether he wanted to return to Rhodesia.

At the time the Milbys left, there had been no attacks on their home or on the Baptist church in Plumtree although nothing but open bush country lies between them and the border.

Milby, a 47-year-old field evangelist who has worked for the past five years starting churches among the Matabele tribespeople of western Rhodesia, said he can no longer visit his preaching points in the South Nata Tribal Trust Land.

Chief Gambo, who had invited Milby to begin churches in this tribal area, was killed by guerrillas about a year ago.

"There's absolutely no means of communication now with this area," Milby said. "It has been at least four months since we have seen anyone from there."

The Milbys said they have been encouraged, however, by the growth of their multi-racial church in Plumtree. Worship attendance averages 35, and 65 to 70 attend Sunday School.

The church draws from the 300 Europeans (the term used to describe all whites in Rhodesia) and from the estimated 3,000 to 4,000 blacks living in the Plumtree area.

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Milby hopes that a member of this year's graduating class from the Baptist seminary in Gwelo will accept a call to become pastor of the church.

Most of the 75 Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to Rhodesia work in the urban areas. But for the Milbys and others who live near the borders, precautions become a normal part of their daily routine.

They don't travel before 8 o'clock in the morning or after 4 in the afternoon. Since most attacks occur between 5 p.m. and dark, the missionaries pull their drapes about dusk so that guerrillas using Russian-made AK rifles cannot shoot them through an open window. The Milbys also turn on lights in every room to keep attackers from knowing exactly which room they are in.

Since their return to Louisville, Ky., on furlough, Mrs. Milby admits, they have realized how relaxing it can be just to sit in the yard or on the porch without having to worry about the possibility of attack.

Nevertheless, they are already planning their return to Plumtree in September.

Because of the urgent need to continue training Rhodesians to carry on Baptist work, "I can't see anything else," Mrs. Milby said.

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WMU Executive Board Votes  
\$4,236,653 Budget

Baptist Press  
6/11/78

ATLANTA (BP)--The Executive Board of Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to Southern Baptist Convention, meeting prior to WMU's national annual meeting in Atlanta, adopted a budget of \$4,236,653 for 1978-79.

Revenue for the record budget will come primarily from sales of WMU's missions magazines, including a new one unveiled at the Executive Board session.

The new periodical, called "Share," the first Baptist missions publication for preschool boys and girls, will accompany mission studies beginning in October.

The WMU board affirmed extra high goals for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, major fund-raising projects led by WMU. Projected to cover new programs in the SBC Bold Mission Thrust, the foreign mission goal will be \$40,000,000, and the home mission goal will be \$15,000,000.

The WMU leaders representing 33 state Baptist conventions studied a strategy for ministering to the children of missionaries. State and associational WMUs will begin accelerated personal care programs directed to the children.

In long range planning, WMU set priorities for national operations in 1978-82--the timeblock for Bold Mission Thrust, the SBC plan to evangelize the world in this century. Goals relate to enlargement of WMU, plans to encourage Baptists to make "life-changing commitments" to mission support, increased contacts with denominational and church professional leadership, and more efficient internal management practices.

Pilot tests of missions organizations on college campuses caused the WMU board to modify its program design for Campus Baptist Young Women. The refined plans will be implemented officially in 1979.

The WMU staff announced a new data system for discovering and nurturing potential employees for state and national WMU offices. A pilot project for use of volunteer women in the national WMU office, Birmingham, Alabama, will be continued for another year. Thirty women are already serving as adjunct staff under the plan.

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SBC Forms  
Research Group

ATLANTA (BP)--A Southern Baptist Research Fellowship was organized here with the adoption of a constitution, election of officers, and identification of areas in which Southern Baptists need research.

About 20 persons, many of them with research responsibilities in Southern Baptist agencies, met at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to write a constitution containing the purpose of "providing an informal forum for Southern Baptists with professional interests in and/or assignments for religious research."

The group elected Leonard Irwin of Atlanta, director of the planning section of the home mission agency, as its first president.

Other officers are program vice president, J. V. Thomas of Dallas, church evangelism consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Texas; membership vice president, Jim Lowry of Nashville, denominational statistics coordinator, Baptist Sunday School Board; secretary-treasurer, Roy Jennings of Memphis, administrative assistant, Brotherhood Commission; newsletter editor; Orrin Morris of Atlanta, regional coordinator, home mission agency; and awards chairman, Martin Bradley of Nashville, director of the research services department, Sunday School Board.

Albert McClellan of Nashville, program planning secretary for Southern Baptists' Executive Committee, identified 15 areas where he felt Southern Baptists need immediate research.

They included the independent church movement, para-denominational groups, missions motivation, church growth, placing of ministers, attitudes of young married people and singles toward the church, loyalties and attitudes of ministers under 35, cultural attitudes of church members, the place of women in Southern Baptist life, the effect of changing neighborhoods on churches, the point of diminishing return for churches, and the absorption of six million members into Southern Baptist churches.

McClellan told the researchers they face a series of problems. He identified the most prominent as the attitude among many Southern Baptists that "somehow the Holy Spirit will tell us what we need to know without research."

"We must not ignore the Holy Spirit," McClellan said. "He wants us to go ahead with the best research available."

McClellan said Southern Baptists show a lack of interest in using research to build promotion plans while some Southern Baptist leaders have an inclination to depend on their own intuition instead of research to make decisions.

Citing a series of steps the fellowship could take, McClellan said one is to establish the principle that there should be no development without research and no research without development.

SBC Seminaries Hold First  
Joint Meet in 15 Years

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Baptist Press  
6/11/78

PINE MOUNTAIN, Ga. (BP)--Faculty and administration of Southern Baptist's six theological seminaries, scattered geographically from coast to coast, emphasized a theme of cooperation in their first joint meeting in 15 years.

The six Southern Baptist Convention -sponsored seminaries ordinarily have few opportunities for regular contact between their faculties.

Fellowship and discussion among counterparts in sister schools consumed large portions of this three-day meeting, but the 200 teachers and staff members also heard challenges from three key denominational leaders.

Grady Cothen, SBC Sunday School Board president, introduced new members of the board staff and previewed the new Bible Book curriculum series. Striking a theme of cooperation heard throughout the meeting, Cothen pointed to the board's recent funding of professorships at the seminaries to serve as liaisons with the board. "Their role is to facilitate two-way communication," Cothen stressed.

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Porter Routh, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, recalled his recent hospitalization with what was at first thought to be a heart attack but proved not to be serious. "It reminded me that Bold Mission Thrust is related to hurt hearts and to ultimate reality more than to objectives and measurable goals," he said. "The strong, motivating force behind Bold Mission Thrust is a renewed concern among Southern Baptists to take the Great Commission seriously."

Bold Mission Thrust, the SBC's plan to evangelize the world in this century, also was the theme of an address by William Tanner, executive director of the SBC Home Mission Board. One of the benefits already realized from the emphasis, Tanner said, is that it has helped Southern Baptist agencies develop "a workable foundation for cooperation. Bold Mission Thrust aims us all in a given direction."

Tanner also pointed to a new channeling of volunteers and a new utilization of resources. "If we stay with this thing like we're going, we may be able to look back in 50 years or so and see that we turned a corner in involvement with Bold Mission Thrust," he said.

The six SBC seminaries are New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary, which coordinated arrangements for the retreat; Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C.; and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

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Talmadge Submits Bills

To Remedy ERISA Ills

By Jack Harwell

ATLANTA (BP)--Legislation which clarifies the definition of "church plan" under the federal pension law has been introduced in the U. S. Senate by Herman E. Talmadge, Democratic Senator from Georgia.

The senator notified Searcy Garrison, executive secretary of the Georgia Baptist Convention, who has worked to get the legislation introduced.

The legislation holds significance for all ministers and denominational employees who participate in church retirement plans. According to Darold H. Morgan, president of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board in Dallas, the bills will remedy a number of technical defects in the employee retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

"They will enable many ministers and other denominational employees to have greater retirement benefits than ERISA now allows," Dr. Morgan said.

Dr. Garrison noted that Southern Baptists have been concerned about this legislation for several years. He explains the bills also are of "particular importance to Georgia Baptists."

He said the 1976 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Norfolk passed a resolution relating to it. The resolution opposed excessive government interference with church ministries and resolved to support legislation to keep church plans from being broken up, Garrison said.

Sen. Talmadge's bills were co-sponsored by Sen. Lloyd Bentsen of Texas. Similar bills were introduced in the House by Rep. Barber Conable Jr. of New York.

Major religious denominations have been concerned with provisions in ERISA which prohibit church agencies from participating in a church plan beginning in 1983.

The Talmadge-Bentsen bills recognize that church agencies may continue to participate in church plans. Also, under these bills, church plans would not have to be broken up as ERISA now requires.

One of the bills co-sponsored by Sen. Talmadge allows greater catch-up contributions to be made by denominational employees to retirement annuity plans without causing adverse income tax problems.

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Under current provisions of ERISA, denominational leaders have been concerned that many of their employees will not have any additional pension benefits if they were forced out of church plans in 1983.

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Education Essential to  
Survival of Church

Baptist Press  
6/11/78

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Increased education in churches is essential if the church is to survive, according to Roy Edgemon, director of the church training department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Edgemon said in an address during youth week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center that the foremost need is for better education in the church about the belief of Southern Baptists.

Tracing the development of church training, Edgemon said, "In the 1930s and 1940s church training blossomed and brought many activities to the church aimed at youth. Later adults became involved and church training became a fixture and a necessity."

In the 1960s the anti-institutional sentiments that rocked the nation also had their effect on the church, said Edgemon, a former pastor and missionary. Church training was hit the hardest, he said, because it registered institutional structure of the church.

"People still had the desire for something on Sunday night, but not for church training," Edgemon continued. "Churches today are feeling the results of a generation without a solid background in the doctrines of the church and people are beginning to ask 'what have we done to ourselves?'"

Increasingly the need for further and more extensive church training is making itself felt, he said. "Southern Baptists are seeing a new breed of lay ministers who are not satisfied with the church performing just maintenance duties. They want to spread their religion across the world and want the training to do it."

Another area of programs needed, he said, includes education of new converts.

"Baptists are finding that their back door is almost as big as their front door," Edgemon said, describing the loss of new converts.

"We must have a concentrated program to help new converts. In many cases, adults are giving up a whole set of lifelong values and adopting new ones. Unless some sort of training program is started to help acquaint and support these new converts we will continue to lose them."

The church training department, he said, is mobilizing to meet these needs and others which arise daily. Through the use of its new "Equipping Centers" concept, the department plans to meet immediate training needs in specialized fields. Equipping Centers in individual churches will house modules with materials for individual study, small and large group study and seminars.

"Short term training helps to satisfy needs that exist now, but on a long term basis, the church's survival depends on the ongoing program that church training has always done," Edgemon said.

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Anita Bryant Draws Support  
From Baptist Pastors

Baptist Press  
6/11/78

By David Wilkinson

ATLANTA (BP)--If entertainer and anti-gay rights activist Anita Bryant harbored any doubts about support from her fellow Southern Baptists, those doubts were emphatically erased by wave after wave of thundering applause on opening night of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.

As 2,000 gay rights supporters demonstrated outside the Georgia World Congress Center, Miss Bryant staged her own demonstration inside before an

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estimated 20,000 persons.

Gripping a microphone in one hand and her well-worn red Bible in the other, Miss Bryant received a standing ovation from the packed house as she entered the auditorium singing "I'll be a friend to Jesus as long as I live."

Bryant's next lengthy round of applause came when she told her audience, "I believe with all my heart that the people outside should not be picketing Anita Bryant. They should be picketing the ministers of this nation for telling it like it is."

She made frequent allusions to the anti-gay rights battle she has waged during the past year, saying "the Christian life is not an easy one, but the Lord never promised it would be easy. He promised that there would be tribulation and trials.

"I used to hear that the Christian life is living above the jungle. But being a Christian is not living above the jungle; it's living in the jungle."

Introduced by Pastors' Conference President Bailey Smith as "a courageous Christian who stands for what we believe," Bryant several times thanked the standing-room-only crowd for its support.

"Many times," she said, "I have been at the end of my rope and I have asked, 'Why me?' I don't have the qualifications, the education, the intellect. I don't know how to express myself.

"I'm not a minister," she told the ministers' conference. "I'm a woman, a woman with a mother's heart."

She requested the continued prayers of Southern Baptists, particularly for Anita Bryant Ministries, a network of counseling centers she hopes to establish to "minister" to homosexuals across the country.

"I thank God that I've heard from over 1,000 homosexuals who have been delivered from immorality," the professional entertainer said. "God gives me love so I can even love the homosexual."

In a reference to the frequent opposition she has encountered for her anti-gay rights stand, Miss Bryant said, "I used to be concerned about criticism, but I'm no longer concerned with what people think of me. I am just concerned with what criticism God has for me."

Clad in a full-length white dress that accented both her Bible and flaming red hair, Bryant interspersed her Christian testimony with several favorite sacred and patriotic songs.

Closing with an enthusiastic rendering of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," she waved to the crowd as the audience voiced a final "Amen" with another standing ovation.

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Gay Rights Pickets  
Lambast Anita Bryant

Baptist Press  
6/11/78

ATLANTA (BP)--A noisy but orderly crowd of about 2,000 gay rights supporters marched and demonstrated outside the Georgia World Congress Center while singer Anita Bryant spoke to some 20,000 Southern Baptists inside.

There were no major incidents. The demonstration was loud, but no violence broke out.

"Never before has the national gathering of the Southern Baptist Convention been so greeted as they have been tonight," said Linda Regnier, a representative of the Atlanta Gay Rights Alliance in a brief speech to the demonstrators.

A parade of a dozen speakers addressed the demonstrators over a portable public address system perched on the back of a jeep parked on a plaza outside the World Congress Center.

As the demonstrators yelled, whistled and chanted, Ms. Regnier observed, "I hope the walls are shaken by all this outside tonight."

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Adjacent to the 2,000 gay rights demonstrators, about a dozen placard-carrying Christians staged a counter demonstration, singing hymns, quoting scriptures, and passing out tracts to demonstrators.

The two demonstrating groups exchanged shouts and heckling yells, but no confrontations took place.

The gay rights demonstrators, who obtained a parade permit from Atlanta police several weeks earlier, gathered at the Central City Park, a half-dozen blocks away from the World Congress Center, on Sunday, June 11.

At 7:00 p.m., they marched together in orderly ranks, carrying placards, and chanting as they walked: "Hey, he; ho, ho; Anita Bryant's got to go." They also chanted as they marched, "Gay rights now."

Most carried placards and banners. Some of them said: "Judge not that you be not judged;" "Love is never wrong, bigotry is never right;" "Jesus does not discriminate;" "Anita Bryant, bigot of the year;" "Stop religious fascism;" "Boycott Florida Oranges;" "Oral is Moral;" "Christ taught love, not hate;" "Bryant Buffalos Baptists for Bucks."

When the crowds arrived at the World Congress Center, they were greeted with a dozen counter demonstrators, who carried placards, held Bibles high, and quoted scripture to those passing by.

Some of their placards read: "Praise God for Anita Bryant;" "Save the Children;" "The effeminate (homosexuals) shall not inherit the Kingdom of God--1 Corin. 6:9-11;" "Stop ERA and Gay Rights--Normal People for Anita;" "Homosexuality is a sin."

Only a dozen "Concerned Christians" showed up to support Anita Bryant, contrary to published reports that six busloads were enroute from Charlotte, N.C., to "show our love and admiration for Anita Bryant."

One of those who demonstrated for Miss Bryant was Mel Perry, pastor of Grace Bible Presbyterian Church in Nashville, who brought two of his members with him to carry placards, preach and sing.

Two Episcopalians also demonstrated in support of Miss Bryant. Jim and Pam Glanton of Atlanta said they wanted to "show support for Anita."

Ms. Regnier, in her brief speech to the demonstrators, announced that more than 4,000 were participating. A spokesman for the Gay Christian Council said he had counted 400 rows of 10 marchers each.

Capt. C. V. Forrester of the Atlanta Police Department, who coordinated traffic control for the march, said the 4,000 figure was "a great exaggeration." Capt. Forrester said the crowd was 2,000 at the most. Others estimated less than that.

Victor Host, coordinator of the Atlanta Gay Rights Alliance and one of the organizers for the rally and demonstration, said he was thrilled with the number of demonstrators present, and the orderly process.

Last summer, a similar demonstration planned by the Atlanta Gay Rights Council drew 400 participants, "and I thought that was terrific," Host said. "Imagine how terrific I think this is," he said.

James Moody, who served as master of ceremonies for the rally, stirred the crowd by saying, "We don't intend to sit still while our rights are being chipped away by groups of misinformed individuals who may be sincere, but are off the track."

Saying that homosexuals are guaranteed basic human rights by the Constitution, Moody declared, "The Constitution of the United States, and not the Bible, is the law of this country."

Bob Wheatley of Boston, director of the Unitarian Universalist Association's office of gay concerns, said that "Anita Bryant has chosen to make this a religious matter, but I'm here to say that not all religious people agree with her. Anita Bryant," he argued, "speaks for only a narrow range of religious thought in America."

Maria Dolan, who introduced herself to the demonstrators as a "defiant dyke (lesbian)," shouted that being defiant is the only way homosexuals will survive the opposition to gay rights in America.

"I'm defiant because I hate to accept the hate mongers' definition of myself as a moral degenerate," Ms. Dolan said.



Representatives of almost a dozen human right, homosexual, and other groups sponsoring the demonstration spoke briefly to the demonstrators. Most sat or stood in orderly rows in the concrete plaza outside the World Congress Center, while a line of 30 uniformed Georgia State Troopers behind barricades stood between them and the 20,000 Baptists inside the convention hall.

Maj. Hugh Hardison, who coordinated crowd control for the Georgia State Troopers, said he was pleased with the orderly conduct of the demonstrators. The only problem, he said, was a shouting match that developed between the demonstrators and counter demonstrators, but it lasted only briefly.

The crowd of demonstrators was a diverse group. There were only a few white shirts and ties among the group. Most were dressed in jeans and were under 30 years of age.

There were Unitarians, Lutherans, Evangelicals and reportedly a few Baptist pastors' sons in the crowds. Most would not give their names to reporters. One group marched beneath a banner saying "Born Again and Proudly Gay."

The marchers were organized and led by a group of enlisted "marshalls" enlisted to prevent violence and confrontations by the Atlanta Coalition for Human Rights.

The marshalls wore pink arm bands with a black triangle. One demonstrator explained that the arm bands were symbolic of the way Adolph Hitler required homosexuals to identify themselves during Nazi Germany days.

One woman with a broken leg made the entire march in a wheel chair pushed by her friends.

Groups of gay rights supporters came from Chattanooga, Nashville, and Murfreesboro, Tenn., Mobile and Birmingham, Ala., Charlotte, N. C., and Miami, Fla. Most, according to Moody, were from Atlanta.

The demonstrators dispersed in orderly fashion after the rally ended, just as darkness settled and the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference inside concluded.

A few hot words were exchanged by demonstrators and Baptists who were leaving, but police quickly formed a cordon to separate the groups. Most Baptists who went by the demonstrators after hearing Miss Bryant speak were not overly concerned by the demonstration.

Bill Kennedy, of Chattanooga, and president of the Tennessee Baptist Pastors' Conference, said "I am grateful they have the freedom to protest. Nowhere but in America could they do that. I disagree strongly with them, however."

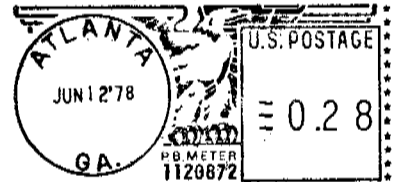
Ernie White, pastor of Wyatt Park Baptist Church in St. Joseph Mo., commented. "I think the demonstration is unfortunate. I favor Anita Bryant for the courage of her stand, but I think demonstrations only tend to breed suspicion and hatred."

Many said they back Anita 100 percent."



**BAPTIST PRESS**

460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219



*Jun 12*

LYNN MAY  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
127 9TH AVE NO  
NASHVILLE TN 37203