

Tennessee School Censorship Bill Defeated Again on Roll Call Vote

Tennessee State House Bill HB2997, which would have prohibited any instruction in human sexuality other than heterosexuality in grades K-8 of public schools, was defeated in the House K-12 subcommittee on Feb. 19.

News Analysis by Chris Sanders
Chair and President
Tennessee Equality Project

Because the sponsor Rep. Stacey Campfield (R-Knoxville) requested a roll call vote, which did not occur at the original subcommittee meeting, he was granted his request Mar. 4. In a 6 to 4 vote along party lines, the House K-12 Subcommittee voted to uphold its earlier action of referring the measure to the State Department of Education, effectively killing the bill.

The Tennessee Equality Project expressed gratitude to the six legislators who voted to uphold the Feb. 19 vote.

In his Feb. 19 discussion of the bill, Rep. Campfield mentioned two schools where homosexuality is supposedly being "taught." When pressed for specifics by Rep. Ulysses Jones (D-Memphis), Rep. Campfield would not name the schools. The issue came up again during the Mar. 4 subcommittee meeting.

Rep. Jones requested that the

State Department of Education investigate Rep. Campfield's allegations and report back to the subcommittee in two weeks.

Now that Rep. Campfield's desire for a roll call vote has been satisfied, we can sort out the real issues driving this bill—prejudice and election year politics. To help you understand the depth of fear and nonsense behind this legislation, we have provided an extended video clip of the Feb. 19 House K-12 subcommittee meeting. The clip is used with permission and can be viewed at <http://tnep.org/video021908.htm>.

The clip shows 38 minutes from the time young Lilith Jackson of the Chattanooga TEP delegation was introduced to the final gavel of the subcommittee meeting. (The clip is best viewed with broadband access and you may need to give the file a minute to buffer.)

The clip shows Rep. Campfield's attempts to defend the bill (approx 25 min. into the clip). At one point, he implies that sometimes teachers "prosely-

tize" students with respect to their sexuality. He also reads a list of types of minorities and gives particular emphasis to "sexual orientation" and "gender identity."

He tries to draw a distinction between "tolerating" different people and "accepting" their "lifestyles."

And that word "lifestyles" explains everything. It is the blank slate upon which those who are biased against our community write everything they imagine to be true about us, and it is always the worst.

One's sexual orientation and one's gender identity are not lifestyles. They are aspects of our being and pertain to our personhood.

Because Rep. Campfield either doesn't realize or won't admit that, he can't see that his way of thinking forces him to defend not accepting all students in our state's public schools, and that is an indefensible position.

The Tennessee Equality Project is a 501c4 organization incorporated in Tennessee.



Alan Herbers was just one of the bachelors and bachelorettes auctioned off during the MGLCC's Sixth Annual B&B Auction held Mar. 14 at Pat O'Brien's on Beale St. The event raised more than \$8000 for the center.

Barbara Walters and Israeli Film Get Gay Media Awards

Television journalist Barbara Walters was honored by the gay media watchdog group GLAAD on Mar. 17 for her reporting on transgender children and she said the award was among the most important she had even received.

"You can forget all the Emmys," Walters said in accepting the award for television newsmagazine journalism at the 19th annual Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation Media Awards. "This means more to me."

The veteran television personality won for the story "My Secret Self: A Story of Transgender Children," which aired on ABC's 20/20 and examined the lives and struggles of young children who experienced conflicted gender identity, feeling their true sex was the opposite of their physical one.

See GLAAD Awards on p. 5



Journalist Barbara Walters thanks the audience after winning an award during the 19th annual GLAAD Media awards in New York Mar. 17.

Two Gay Teens Killed in Just Two Weeks

The defining setting for anti-gay violence for the last decade was a rickety fence in a desolate Wyoming field. But a string of anti-gay beatings, shootings and killings in recent months shows that homophobic hatred didn't disappear when Matthew Shepard was killed 10 years ago this October, nor is it confined to rural pockets of America's heartland.

By Ryan Lee

In the last year alone, young gay people have died at the hands of straight friends in central Florida, been beaten to death after leaving a bar in Greenville, S.C., and assassinated in an eighth grade classroom in California.

Recently in Athens, Ga., a 17-year old gay man carrying a purse was beaten and verbally gay-bashed by three boys he knew, according to a March 4 report in the Athens Banner-Herald.

"I think if you ask the average American, they think Matthew Shepard was the last person killed in this country for being gay," said

Kevin Jennings, executive director of the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, a national group that focuses on gay issues in schools. "Unfortunately, that's not the case."

Elke Kennedy knew her son Sean was gay by the time he was six years old, but slight pangs of fear rushed through her when Sean came out to her in 2004 at age 17.

"I was really more worried about him being harassed and people not liking him for who he was," Kennedy said. "It's a common concern, and I think it's getting worse now."

At about 4:30 a.m. on May 16, 2007, Kennedy received a call from

a hospital that many mothers of gay children dread. She asked if her son was seriously hurt, and was told only that she needed to arrive at the hospital as soon as she could.

As her 20-year-old son lay brain dead in South Carolina's Greenville Memorial Hospital, Kennedy learned that Sean was leaving a bar when he was attacked by a young man who called him a "faggot."

The beating caused Sean's brain to separate from his brain stem and ricochet inside his skull. He was taken off life support later that night.

Although South Carolina police

See Two Gay Teens on p. 6

Experts Say Sex Diseases in Many Gay Men Go Undetected

Many cases of sexually transmitted diseases are escaping detection because gay men are not being tested each year as advised, federal health officials said Mar. 12. And if the men do show up, the officials added, many doctors and clinics are not following screening recommendations.

But more cases could be detected if the government approved new ways to use a type of DNA test that is already on the market, the officials and researchers said in a news conference at a scientific meeting in Chicago.

They said the test, used in new ways, could detect twice as many cases of gonorrhea and chlamydia as standard tests.

Those diseases, along with syphilis, whose incidence continues to increase, are "a major threat to gay and bisexual men's health," said Dr. Kevin Fenton, a top official of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Fenton noted that such diseases increased the risk of contracting and spreading HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Screening for sexually transmitted infections is a critical part of medical care for sexually active men. The CDC recommends annual blood tests for HIV and syphilis, and other tests for gonorrhea and chlamydia.

Gonorrhea tests should include specimens from all potential sites of exposure — throat, genitals and rectum — because identifying and treating all such infections is essential for preventing spread of the disease.

"There are circumstances where the recommendations are not being followed," said Dr. John M. Douglas Jr., who directs the Division of STD Prevention at the disease control centers.

Dr. Douglas added that some doctors did not recognize the problem while others seemed to think "that maybe the guidelines do not apply to my patient population."

Supporting evidence came from CDC researchers, who reported three studies at the meeting showing that the screening rates were too low.

Dr. Kristen Mahle's study found that among gay men who showed no symptoms of gonorrhea, more

than a third of rectal infections with the disease and more than a quarter of throat infections were missed because many were not tested at all anatomical sites of recent exposure.

Dr. Eric Tai's study surveyed non-HIV-positive gay men in 15 cities from 2003 to 2005 and found that only 39 percent reported having been tested for syphilis, and only 36 percent for gonorrhea.

Dr. Karen Hoover found that while doctors tested 82 percent of HIV-positive gay men in eight cities for syphilis in 2005, they tested 22 percent or fewer for gonorrhea and chlamydia.

One problem is that public health departments that run sexual disease clinics do not have adequate staffs and budgets to do comprehensive testing.

"Let's be honest, resources are a challenge at a federal, state and local level," said Dr. Douglas, of the disease control centers. "We are trying to be as innovative as we can with public health resources," but "we need help from others."

Another problem is that newer tests are not being used as much as they should be, Dr. Douglas said.

The DNA test that Dr. Douglas and others described as promising is called NAAT, for nucleic acid amplification test. It is generally more accurate and easier to use, and it can detect at least twice as many gonorrhea and chlamydia infections in the throat and rectum, according to studies by Dr. Julius Schachter of the University of California, San Francisco, and others. Moreover, it is faster than the traditional bacterial culture tests.

The Food and Drug Administration has approved three NAATs to screen for gonorrhea and chlamydia in the genitalia, but not the throat or rectum.

Dr. Schachter's team, which included the San Francisco Depart-

ment of Public Health, sought to determine whether the marketed NAATs were also effective in throat and rectal screening.

The CDC is working with the food and drug agency and with test manufacturers to gather, analyze and coordinate the submission of data for federal approval of NAATs for use in the throat and rectum.

The San Francisco Department of Public Health has conducted a study that met FDA requirements for such use. Now the health department uses NAATs to test for chlamydia and gonorrhea at all three anatomic sites.

Dutch May Legalize Gay Sex in Public Park

Dutch council officials may permit gay sex in public areas but fine dog owners who let their pets off the leash in Amsterdam's Vondelpark.

Paul van Grieken, an alderman in the Oud-Zuid district of the city, has startled many Amsterdammers, despite their famously liberal attitudes, with plans to allow public sex as part of this summer's new rules of conduct for the country's best-known park.

"Why should we try to impose something that is actually impossible to impose, which also causes little bother for others and for a certain group actually means much pleasure?" he said.

Amsterdam's beautiful Vondelpark in the centre of city draws hordes of summer visitors,

families, skaters and joggers.

But the park's rose garden has become famous as a trysting spot for gay men looking for uncomplicated sexual encounters.

Van Grieken stresses that tolerance to "cruising" gays, aimed at protecting homosexuals from violence, will have "strict rules attached".

"Thus, condoms must always be cleared away, it must never take place in the neighbourhood of children's playgrounds and the sex must be restricted to the evening and night-time," he said.

Gay and Graying: Concerns for the Future

More than 70 percent of lesbian and gay and respondents over age 40 reported concerns about losing the ability to care for themselves in a recent study conducted by Community Marketing, Inc. The majority also feared becoming sick or disabled, being dependent on others, and outliving their savings.

When asked which resources they would rely on for long-term financial and social care as they age, less than 8 percent of respondents said they would place significant reliance on long-term care insurance, raising the question of how prepared lesbians and gay men are for the kinds of health issues that often come with old age. Respondents placed the most emphasis on:

- Health care insurance: 22 percent
- Medicare: 20 percent
- Personal savings: 19 percent
- Social Security: 16 percent

Sixty-five percent of respondents expect to provide care to a partner sometime in the future, 44 percent for a parent, and 34 percent for a friend. However, respondents were less certain of who would care for them — 59 percent said a partner would be there to help care for

them, 29 percent a friend, and 20 percent no one.

A significant 20 percent of gay male and 38 percent of lesbian respondents over age 40 have children (just 4 percent of gay men and 12 percent of lesbians reported the children to be under age 18). Sometimes it is easy forget how many gay-boomers had children before they came out, and some gays and lesbians will be able to rely on their children for care.

The majority of respondents have completed a Living Will and the majority have a Power of Attorney, but less than 50 percent have completed an Estate Will or set up a Living Trust. (Hospitals often require a visiting partner to present a living will in order to enter his or her partner's hospital room.)

49 percent of respondents said they are at least fairly confident that

they would be treated with dignity and respect by medical personnel, but 19 percent expressed concerns that they have little confidence in this being the case.

Some views of retirement and old age are much more positive. Respondents look forward to: traveling (79 percent), having more time for personal interests (74 percent), and peace and relaxation (60 percent). In addition, lesbians were more likely to report looking forward to spending more time with friends and family than gay men.

Demographics of this "over 40" study:

- The median age is 52.
- 69 percent of respondents are male, 30 percent female, and 1 percent transgender. More than 96 percent of respondents identified as gay or lesbian. The remainder identified their sexual orientation as bisexual, queer or questioning.
- 53 percent of respondents reported that they are completely out. However, 15 percent are somewhat or not very out.
- The median respondent in all age categories reported plans to retire at age 62. The vast majority of respondents over age 62 have already retired.
- 73 percent of respondents have a college degree.
- 33 percent of female respondents and 46 percent of male respondents are single or do not live with a significant other. Lesbians are more likely to be partnered than gay men.
- The majority own single family homes.

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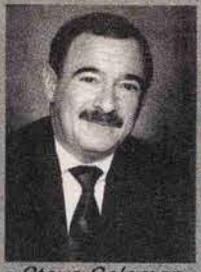
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Britain Grants Temporary Reprieve to Gay Iranian man

A gay Iranian man who says he faces death if forced to return to his home country was granted a temporary reprieve from deportation Mar. 13 by British authorities.

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith said the case of Mehdi Kazemi, 19, would be reconsidered after "new circumstances" came to light.

Kazemi is currently in the Netherlands, where authorities on Mar. 11 rejected his appeal for asylum, and he is likely to be sent to Britain, where he lived from 2005 until last year.

"Following representations made on behalf of Mehdi Kazemi, and in the light of new circumstances since the original decision was made, I have decided that Mr Kazemi's case should be reconsidered on his return to the UK from the Netherlands," Smith said.

Kazemi came to London to study English but said he later discovered that his boyfriend had been arrested by Iranian police, charged with sodomy and hanged.

He applied for asylum in Britain last year, but when he was rejected he fled to the Netherlands.

Ben Summerskill of the British-based gay rights group Stonewall said: "We are obviously delighted that the home secretary has listened to the representations that were made in this case.

"There are overwhelming reasons why people should not be deported to Iran in the current circumstances, and it is important that Britain is seen as a safe haven."

EU lawmakers at the European Parliament in Strasbourg called on Britain to look favorably on Kazemi's attempts to secure asylum, saying he would be executed if he was deported to Iran.

The Iranian authorities "routinely imprison, torture and execute homosexuals," the lawmakers said in a resolution.

After Pressure From ACLU, Gay Georgia Man Allowed To Join State Insurance Plan

After pressure from the American Civil Liberties Union, Georgia's Commissioner of Insurance has agreed to allow Jon Lawson, a gay man, to purchase health insurance through a state plan designed to help people who are uninsured.

Although the plan only requires that an applicant is insured for 18 months before joining the plan, Commissioner John Oxendine's office rejected Lawson's application, claiming that he was ineligible because had been covered as a domestic partner through his previous insurance plan.

This is not the first time Commissioner Oxendine used his position to try to bar gay people from getting public health insurance. After the city of Atlanta persuaded the Georgia Supreme Court that it was justified in providing domestic partner benefits to its employees, Oxendine tried to block the city's plan by withholding approval of the change in policy. The city was forced to bring a lawsuit against him, which it ultimately won.

"I'm happy that the insurance commissioner did the right thing, not only in my case but for others who may be in the same situation," said Jon Lawson, a 51-year-old Atlanta resident who was about to become uninsured after separating from his domestic partner who had provided his health insurance. "Anyone who needs health insurance and meets the state's requirements should not be denied under any circumstances."

After breaking up with his partner of six years, Lawson, who

worked for many years in the travel industry but is currently uninsured, discovered he was eligible for insurance under the Georgia State Insurance Assignment System. The program was started to give people who have insurance but are about to become uninsured the opportunity to purchase insurance.

Meeting all the qualifications, he applied for the program and provided proof that he was insured for the required previous 18 months.

Several days later, he received a call from Insurance Commissioner Oxendine's office and explained that he was covered as a domestic partner under his former partner's plan.

The same day, he received a fax from the Assignment System Coordinator stating that he was ineligible for the program because, "The relationship of domestic partner is not considered a family relationship under Georgia law. . ."

The ACLU sent a demand letter on January 9, 2008, to Oxendine spelling out Lawson's qualifications for the state insurance program and explaining that disap-

proval of his former relationship was not a valid reason to deny his participation in the program. Lawson received a letter recently from the plan notifying him that he is now insured under the plan.

"It's very clear that the insurance commissioner's office overstepped its authority just to try to disadvantage gay people," said Matt Coles, Director of the ACLU Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Project. "The Insurance Assignment System was put in place to help all Georgians, not just those which the commissioner approves."

"We're relieved that reason ultimately prevailed with the commissioner's office and are hopeful that this move means Commissioner Oxendine will have more respect for gay people," said Debbie Seagraves, executive director of the ACLU of Georgia. "At the very least, his office must realize that barring people from insurance only serves to create a burden on the state - the very reason the Insurance Assignment System was created in the first place."

"Gay Marriage" Question is Simple to Answer

Mind if I try to get people to calm down?

Marriage: A very special act that entails love and commitment; usually done in a church.

Sex: A physical act. Can be done alone, with a partner, with lots of partners or any number of other things.

Religion: Between you and whatever you feel, worship and consider a higher ideal.

Heterosexuality and Homosexuality: part of a vast spectrum of human sexuality.

Respect: Needed by more people than they care to admit.

Law: In this country, the U.S. Constitution, acts of Congress or legislatures, etc, and legal precedent as established in court.

That leaves us three choices as a gays and lesbians —the same choices that are facing people opposed to "gay marriage"

1. Work to make sure the laws are equally enforced in some way.
2. Get a ship and make like the pilgrims.
3. Insist everyone else believe what you believe and waste a lot of time, energy and money on something that is impossible.

"Bisexuality immediately doubles your chances for a date on Saturday night."

— Woody Allen



Anti-Gay Pedophilia Rap Out

There's an old prosecution trick in cases charging men with sexual molestation of boys — play on a jury's ignorance and presumed homophobia to secure a conviction by yelling "gay" at every opportunity.

This trick didn't impress the Court of Appeals of Kansas, which on February 29 reversed the conviction of William James Blomquist because of the trial court's failure to reject the speculative and argumentative evidence about the defendant's alleged sexual orientation and its "relation" to the crimes charged.

Blomquist was charged with having his way sexually with a mentally retarded 12-year-old boy, the son of a family friend. The only "direct" evidence consisted of statements the boy, B.D., made to his mother and his rather vague testimony at trial, as well as statements he made under suggestive questioning by a police investigator.

According to Judge Michael B. Buser's opinion, B.D. frequently stayed overnight at the home Sharon Blomquist shared with her 31-year-old unemployed son, William. The younger Blomquist had befriended B.D. and his mother, Carla, and Carla testified that B.D. enjoyed spending time with William because the two of them worked on cars, built models, and watched movies. But Carla soon became suspicious and sat B.D. down, asking him if anyone had ever touched him or if there had

been sexual contact between him and Blomquist. The youth became upset, denied any such touching, but later told his mother "that he and William had engaged in lewd fondling and oral and anal sodomy."

Blomquist was charged with a total of 78 counts, based on 26 visits by B.D. in late 2004, on each of which he was charged with having committed aggravated indecent liberties with a child, aggravated criminal sodomy, and aggravated indecent solicitation of a child.

The prosecution case was based on repeated allegations that Blomquist was gay. Blomquist, who denied being gay, did not testify in his defense.

The prosecutor introduced the issue of Blomquist's alleged homosexuality from the opening statement to the jury through the introduction of testimony about Sharon's diaries, which revealed that her son had confided that he had a sexual relationship with another man, Brandon, and then was upset when Brandon had sex with somebody else. The prosecution did not produce Brandon as a witness.

The evidence also included a video recording of a police officer interrogating Blomquist, repeat-

edly trying to get him to say he was gay, without directly posing the question. Blomquist consistently denied he was gay. The dates on the alleged misconduct were based on Sharon's journal entries that indicated B.D. had stayed over those nights. There was no specific testimony that anything particular happened on any of the dates.

The prosecution argued that because Blomquist was charged with molesting a boy, his sexual orientation was relevant to establishing motive and to bolstering the credibility of B.D.'s testimony. The trial judge evidently bought it lock, stock, and barrel, but the appellate court did not, reversing the conviction and the sentence of 400 months.

Judge Buser rejected the state's assertion that "lewd fondling or touching between an adult and a 12-year-old child of the same sex is a 'homosexual act.'"

"The State," Buser wrote, "assumes that a sexual desire for children is among those desires which define a homosexual orientation," but he found that argument flawed. Citing court decisions from half a dozen other states, Buser concluded that evidence of homosexuality is not relevant to establish pedophilia, and is prejudicial to the defendant.

"It was unreasonable for the State to assume that a sexual desire for children is among those desires which define a homosexual orientation," Buser wrote. "Nothing in this record suggests that

William's adult relationships with Brandon, Carla, or any woman he may have dated were evidence of the charges against him. Given the 'prejudicial character' of homosexuality, the prosecutor's conduct in this case was analogous to prosecutorial appeals to passion, prejudice and fear which have been so long rejected by Kansas courts. Having carefully considered the record, we hold the prosecutor's conduct was improper."

The State argued that Blomquist had put his sexuality at issue by making no attempt to deny prosecution assertions through defense witnesses.

"We do not agree, based on this record, that William placed his sexual orientation at issue," Buser wrote. "Rather, it was the prosecutor who within moments of the trial's commencement labeled William a homosexual and proceeded to develop the State's case-in-chief around William's purported sexual orientation... If that were not the

State's assumption, nothing would be left of its trial strategy but a pure appeal to prejudice. We would not hesitate to find ill will in such a situation."

Without this tainted evidence, the State's case, relying solely on B.D.'s vague and indecisive testimony, fell apart.

"The testimony was not direct and overwhelming," Buser wrote. "William does not challenge the sufficiency of the evidence, but even so an inference was required. The inference, that William committed each of the acts charged during every overnight stay shown in Sharon's journals, was susceptible to the prosecutor's misconduct. We cannot say that the error was harmless."

Blomquist also challenged the state's expert testimony about homosexuality and pedophilia, which the appeals court found to be an error that reinforced the prosecution's improper reliance on arguing that the defendant was gay.

Honolulu School Will Permit Gay Couples Family Housing

A University of Hawaii officials says the school is working on a policy to admit same-sex couples into family housing.

A gay couple is suing the university for not allowing them to return to the housing area they lived in last year because it's reserved for married couples. Joseph O'Leary and Phi Ngo said living off-campus has cost them extra rent, transportation and food.

University Vice Chancellor Francisco Hernandez called the lawsuit surprising and disap-

pointing.

He said the university already is working on changing its housing policies to accommodate gay couples.

School officials earlier said they were reviewing the policy but could make no commitment.

Attorney Clyde Wadsworth said his clients would like to work with the university to help change the policy.

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Psychoanalysts Support Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Marriage

The American Psychoanalytic Association (APsaA) has issued a position statement supporting the legal recognition of same-sex civil marriage while opposing discrimination against same-sex couples.

In recognition that gay and lesbian couples are raising children and possess the same potential and desire for life-long relationships as their heterosexual counterparts, the APsaA seeks to assist in ending the government-sanctioned discrimination against homosexual couples that denies them over 1,000 federal rights and benefits

"We want people to think about the broad impact the denial of same-sex marriage has on Americans today," says Ethan Grumbach, Ph.D., chair of APsaA's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues. "Families exist in many different ways and it is important for same-sex couples to have legal and societal recognition of their unions for themselves, their children, and their extended families."

APsaA's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues reviewed extensive research on homosexual relationships and gay and lesbian parents and their children prior to issuing

this statement in January 2008. Some relevant statistics and research results are:

- The Kaiser Family Foundation Survey of 2001 found that 68 percent of lesbians and gays considered lesbian and gay marriage to be very important and 25 percent considered it to be somewhat important.

- According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 34 percent of cohabitating female couples and 22 percent of male couples were raising children under the age of 18.

- In a 2006 paper, Charlotte Patterson concluded, "Results of the research (of various population samples of lesbian and gay families) suggest that qualities of family relationships are more tightly linked with child (development) outcomes than is parental sexual orientation."

"Gay and lesbian couples are being denied the right to marry in this country on the basis of false

scientific testimony," says Gary Grossman, Ph.D., member and former chair of APsaA's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues. "As experts on emotional experience, the membership of the American Psychoanalytic Association has an obligation to clarify its position that same-sex marriage offers substantial mental health benefits for the nation's gays and lesbians and their loved ones, and the denial of marriage has psychologically detrimental consequences."

In addition, APsaA's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues is currently developing a proposed position statement on the United States' military policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

The American Psychoanalytic Association is a professional organization of psychoanalysts throughout the United States and is comprised of approximately 3,500 members. Visit <http://www.apsa.org/> for more information.

Gay Deaths at Hands of Nazis a Political Ploy Says Catholic Bishop

Claims by a Scottish Catholic bishop that gays use the Holocaust to further their political objectives have sparked outrage in the Scottish capital.

"The homosexual lobby has been extremely effective in aligning itself with minority groups," the Right Rev. Joseph Devine, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Motherwell, Scotland told a Glasgow audience.

"It is ever present at the service each year for the Holocaust memorial — as if to create for themselves the image of a group of people under persecution," he told the audience.

"I want to ask you if you are able to see the giant conspiracy that's taking place before our eyes? It's a very small group of people, but very active and organized, and extremely indulgent."

Devine, in his speech titled 'Secularism and Secularism: Bug-bears for the Catholic Church in Scotland' went on to further blast LGBT civil rights leaders, specifically targeting Oscar-winning actor Sir Ian McKellen.

McKellen, who was one of the founder of gay rights group Outrage, was honored by the Queen this year.

"In this New Year's Honours List, I saw actor Ian McKellen being honoured for his work on behalf of homosexuals. A century ago, Oscar Wilde was locked up and put in jail," Devine said.

The speech drew immediate condemnation from Scottish gays.

Homophobic Official May Have Gay Son

The Republican state legislator behind what has become one of the most notorious homophobic tirades in history may have a gay son.

During the tirade, which was posted on the video-sharing Web site YouTube on March 7, Rep. Sally Kern of Oklahoma City said "the homosexual agenda" poses a bigger threat to the U.S. than terrorism.

Since being posted on YouTube and the Web site of the Washington, D.C.-based Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, the clip has been viewed by more than 700,000.

On March 12, the gay online news service Queerty reported that

one of Kern's two grown sons, Jesse, is gay. The report was based on comments posted on Web sites by readers who alleged that Jesse Kerns had been disciplined for cruising toilets while a student at Oklahoma Baptist University.

As of March 13, the report had not been confirmed, and Sally Kern's husband, a Baptist preacher, issued a statement denying it.

Media outlets also were poking holes in Kern's assertion that death threats were contained in some of

the thousands of e-mails she received after her remarks were posted on the Web. A law enforcement official who'd been called in to investigate said, March 12 that the e-mails in question didn't contain what could be characterized as death threats.

Sally Kern reportedly was unaware her remarks were being recorded when she made them to a group of fellow Republicans.

GLAAD Awards

Continued from page 1

The award for outstanding film in limited release went to the Hebrew- and Arabic-language film *The Bubble*, distributed by Strand Releasing, about a love affair between an Israeli soldier and a Palestinian man. First Run Features' *For the Bible Tells Me So* was named outstanding documentary.

Honorary awards went to Judy Shepard, the mother of slain gay college student Matthew Shepard, who became an activist for gay and lesbian rights after her son's brutal murder a decade ago, and to MTV executive Brian Graden,

who won the Vito Russo Award, named for the late gay activist and film historian.

BET J, an offshoot of Black Entertainment Television, was also honored, while *60 Minutes* shared the TV newsmagazine award with Walters for *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*, about the U.S. military's policy on gay and lesbian service members.

The awards were hosted by British talk show host Graham Norton, with guest presenters including Mariska Hargitay, Kevin Bacon and Kyra Sedgwick, *American Idol* judge Randy Jack-

son and award-winning actor Alan Cumming.

Other honorees for coverage of gay and lesbian issues included *The New York Times*, magazine *GQ*, CNN.com and the TV show *Boston Legal*.

GLAAD was founded more than 20 years ago to foster positive images of the lives of gay people in the wake of sensational media reporting on AIDS and other topics. Awards will also be presented in south Florida and Los Angeles.

UPS Partners With Gay Business Group

Atlanta-based shipping giant UPS announced Mar. 11, it would partner with the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce to allow gay-owned businesses to join its supplier diversity process.

The diversity program previously covered small businesses, women, minorities and veterans, according to the company.

"Partnering with the NGLCC not only helps LGBT businesses grow by conducting business with UPS, but we also gain access to excel-

lent suppliers," Lisa Johnson, UPS's procurement and supplier diversity manager, said in a press statement.

"Expanding our process to include LGBT-owned businesses reinforces our commitment to supplier diversity," she said.

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Repeal the HIV Ban Moves Out of Committee for a Full Vote by the Senate

Immigration Equality hails the first major step in 15 years to repeal the ban on HIV-positive foreign nationals entering the United States.

The provision to repeal the ban is included in legislation to reauthorize the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), a comprehensive effort to address global HIV/AIDS issues.

PEPFAR was voted out of the Foreign Relations committee Mar. 13 and will proceed to a vote by the full Senate.

For over two decades, the United States has excluded both HIV-positive travelers and "green card" applicants who are HIV-positive.

"The United States has enforced this antiquated policy for too long with no public health rationale for discriminating against HIV-positive people in such a severe manner," said Victoria Neilson, Immigration Equality's legal director.

"Immigration Equality and the coalition of activists fighting against the ban are encouraged that years of hard work resulted in this major step. We are confident that

this vote by the full Senate will be successful and will move the United States one step closer to lifting the HIV immigration ban."

"We appreciate the support by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and now urge the full Senate to repeal this unjust and sweeping policy that deems HIV positive individuals inadmissible to the United States," said Human Rights Campaign (HRC) President Joe Solmonese.

"There remains no public health rationale for treating HIV more harshly than other communicable diseases. This draconian policy must end."

HRC, America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) equality, worked with Immigration Equality on this issue.

HIV is the only medical condition singled out in the Immigration

and Nationality Act as a ground of inadmissibility — creating unnecessary stigma and discrimination against foreign nationals who are HIV-positive.

If passed, the PEPFAR bill will remove the anti-HIV language from the statute and restore the determination of whether HIV is "communicable disease of public health significance," to the discretion of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

In 1987, Senator Jesse Helms offered the ban as an amendment to a bill to fund availability of the antiretroviral drug Zidovudine (AZT). The law passed almost unanimously by Congress, in part as a political trade to obtain the funds for AZT.

In April 1989, Dutch AIDS educator Hans Verhoef was jailed for several days in St. Paul, Minn. when he tried to enter the United States to attend the Conference on

Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in San Francisco. This led to international outrage and a boycott of the conference by activists in 1990. No international conference on HIV/AIDS has been held in the United States since then.

In October 1992, the ban led to the quarantine of about one hundred HIV-positive Haitians at a U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, once again sparking outrage by the international and human rights communities. In 1993, President Bill Clinton tried to issue an executive order to eliminate the ban and brought the issue into the political spotlight once more.

At the urging of Senator Helms, the ban was codified by Congress in 1993, as a climate of fear about HIV and prejudice toward HIV-positive people continued.

The policy which was rooted in the homophobia of Senator Helms, continues to disproportionately affect LGBT individuals since close family relationships with U.S. citi-

zens or lawful permanent residents are generally required to seek waivers and same-sex relationships are not recognized under current immigration law.

Immigration Equality has been a longtime national leader in the fight to lift the ban. As the only national organization fighting for the rights of LGBT and HIV-positive immigrants, Immigration Equality worked to create a comprehensive plan to lift the ban that included advocacy, public education and legal assistance. In anticipation of the vote, Immigration Equality is reaching out to key supporters in the Senate and working with other allies to ensure passage.

"When the United States finally stops discriminating against HIV-positive people we will send a powerful signal to the world that it's not acceptable to stigmatize the millions of people living with this disease," said Neilson. "With today's news, we feel that moment is drawing near."

Two Gay Teens

Continued from page 1

investigated Sean's death as a hate crime, prosecutors said there was no evidence of "malicious intent" to kill, and charged Stephen Moller, 18 at the time of the murder, with involuntary manslaughter in October. The manslaughter charge carries a maximum of five years in prison.

"It's bad enough that you have to lose a child and deal with all of that, but then on top of that you have to deal with the fact that they're saying your son deserved to die, or that [Moller] really didn't mean to do it, so we're just going to give him a slap on the wrist," Kennedy said.

Kennedy said she was also stung by her community's apparent apathetic response.

"People, they're sorry that I lost my son, but they don't want to talk about why he was murdered," she said. "They'd rather ignore that fact

and pretend it didn't happen." Gay people in Greenville have also had a muted reaction to Sean's murder, Kennedy said.

"Most of them, they're afraid," Kennedy said. "For them to give up their life, their job, because they could lose their job, give up their safety — why would people want to stand out there and put themselves in that danger?"

But even in cities with booming gay populations like Atlanta, people are often unaware of or ignore anti-gay violence like the recent killings of gay teenagerist Lawrence King in a California middle school, and Simmie Williams in Ft. Lauderdale.

"I'm kind of frustrated because I think a lot of people are blind to events and activism," said Thomas Byrd, a gay teen who attends high school in Cobb County. "This could've been me or any of us."

From Washington, D.C., to Florida to YouTube, gay people have recently paid tribute to Will-

iams, who was found dead while wearing women's clothes, and King, who was shot in the head at point-blank range by a classmate.

"I think it's amazing that gay and lesbian teens all over the U.S. have done vigils," said Jay Smith, executive director of the Veneta County-Kanawha Alliance, where King participated in events.

"In a few days, three weeks for us," Smith said. "We'll [want] to be out, be proud, and be safe, and Larry [Smith] is talking that anti-hate message."

"Gay people in Lauderdale are experiencing an incredible sense of urgency and concern" after Williams' death, which was followed days later by another local anti-gay attack, said Paul Hyman, executive director of the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of South Florida.

Lawrence King's murder marks the first time in 10 years that an anti-gay killing has come close to becoming a national news story.

"The Matthew Shepard case captured the nation's attention in a way we have not seen since then," said Neil Giuliano, president of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. "All incidents that involve violence and brutality against LGBT people deserve the same kind of public outcry and community response in order to shift that cultural change about LGBT issues," Giuliano added.

News of King's death that weeks in advance from local news agencies, despite it being a "unique, horrifying" case of shooting, saw Jennings from GLSEN, a national

Scott Hall, a hate-crime activist who was attacked in an anti-gay hate crime in 1984, tracks anti-gay violence for a memorial project known as Gay American History.

"It's only the ones that are most horrific and most unusual that get national media play," Hall said.

Media coverage of anti-gay attacks helps galvanize opposition to homophobia, and can transcend

ideological lines. During her Feb. 29 show, Ellen DeGeneres delivered an emotional tribute to King and said his death "is not political."

"A little boy has been killed, and a number of lives have been ruined," DeGeneres said. "When the message out there is a horrible, not to be gay, you can get killed for it, we need to change this message... We must change our country."

In Georgia, the statewide gay rights group, GLBTQ Equality, created a YouTube tribute to King that was state television. "I think it's a beautiful thing," said Paul and Simmie Williams' attorney.

But Ellen Kennedy said that the response to King's murder and with enacting gay-friendly laws.

"California has some of the best laws, but they're still not enough to prevent this from happening because people are still taught to hate and that it's OK," Kennedy said. "I want parents to know that they're the ones that are responsible for teaching their children to hate. I believe it starts at home."

Tragic as they are, anti-gay killings have the potential to bring people together, like at a vigil for Simmie Williams," Hyman of South Florida said.

"It was a really amazing presence of [the Williams family's] religious community and the LGBT community, particularly African-American transgender people having a strong presence," Hyman said.

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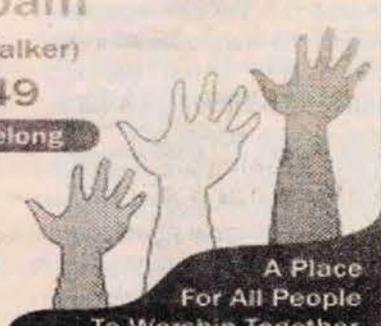
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Unlike Past, Gay Issues Not Expected to Dominate '08 Presidential Election

Amidst the issues dominating the headlines this election season, one is notable by its absence: issues of interest to gay Americans, such as adoption, Don't Ask Don't Tell and especially the hot-button gay-marriage debate don't seem to be playing to the electorate the way they had in election cycles dating back at least to Pat Buchanan's fiery "culture war" speech at the GOP convention that nominated Bush Senior in 1988.

By Scott Stiffler

Amnesty for illegal immigrants; Southern border anxiety and a Great Wall along the Rio Grande; women v. blacks and who's more discriminated against; that terrorist we've yet to catch; the economy; and, of course, the war — these are getting the play, not the social issues such as stem cell research, gay rights or even abortion.

Has the anti-gay playbook been played out?

Not so fast, warns Mark Blasius, emeritus political science professor at the City University of New York.

"We have to wait until we know who the nominees are on both sides and see what issues come to the surface between now and the summer," he says.

"The Democrats are going to be so strong, I don't see how anti-gay issues can be used by the Republicans. It seems the economy, the war and health care are eclipsing social issues."

Bread-and-butter issues will predominate over the gay card, adds Steven Goldstein, chairman of Garden State Equality, the primary gay rights organization in New Jersey, which continues to wrestle with the gay marriage.

"This will not be a year where the Republican will be able to use same-sex marriage as a wedge," he says. "Concern over the economy is so deep, if Republicans try to make marriage the bogeyman, Americans, in red and blue states, will rise up and say that dog won't hunt anymore. We're not buying it."

Besides, Blasius points out that Christian right is in the pocket of the GOP anyway, so why turn off moderates?

All Politics Is Local: State Initiatives

Four years ago, George Bush was aided by local politics. Large numbers of conservatives went to the polls to vote against gay marriage in their state.

"George Bush won Ohio narrowly in 2004, and some commentators believe it was evangelical Christians going out against same-sex marriage that helped him win," notes Dan Pinello, a professor of government at John Jay College of Criminal Justice of in New York.

The marriage issue will be a player this year in Florida, he adds. The state legislature has placed a

ballot issue amending the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage.

"Just like Ohio four years ago, the Republicans in Florida are trying to get out the evangelical Christian vote to ban same-sex marriage and thereby help the Republican nominee," Pinello says.

Also in 2004, 13 states had ballot issues amending state constitutions to ban same-sex marriage. All of them passed, sometimes by substantial margins.

In 2006, the Democrats took control of the state legislatures in Oregon and New Hampshire. As a result, in 2007, both of those state legislatures passed civil unions for same-sex couples, Pinello points out.

The New York State Assembly, the state's lower house, passed a marriage equality bill last June, but it was stalled in the state senate, in which the GOP is hanging by a thread.

Showing just how much Democrats fear gay marriage as a wedge issue bringing out the right fringe, in late February, New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine reacted to the release of a study that cast doubt upon the effectiveness of civil unions by vowing to sign a gay marriage bill. But he added one caveat: he pledged not to sign anything until after the polls closed in November.

The New York Post quoted Corzine spokeswoman Lilo Stainton as saying that Corzine "doesn't want to make it a presi-

dential-election-year issue." Why, then, should equal rights be held hostage by election-year politics?

"Justice delayed is justice denied" says Goldstein, recalling an era when the moral imperative of equality trumped political concerns: "President Johnson in 1964, an election year, did not tell America we cannot pursue the Civil Rights Act for political concerns. There's a history of leaders doing bold and courageous things."

What Pending Court Cases Could Mean

For the 2008 race, Pinello cites pending court cases in California and Connecticut that, if the rulings grant marriage rights, could inspire bring-out-the-vote campaigns by the right. The California Supreme Court decision is likely to come down in June; the Connecticut decision, even sooner.

"If either of those two go in favor of same-sex marriage based on their state constitutions, that will give the Republicans an opportunity to do what George W. Bush has done in the past," Pinello says, "to say that elected representatives of the legislature are the ones who should determine policy, not unelected 'activist' judges."

Blasius sees potential discord in the Democratic Party itself as to how progressive their positions should be. "Both Obama and Clinton have very moderate positions on gay issues," he says.

"They're both against same sex marriage. The only minor difference is, Barack wants to overturn all of the Defense of Marriage Act and Hillary wants to overturn half of it."

PACS, 527s and McCain

With Larry Craig's August 2007 quickie stop in a Minneapolis airport bathroom still in the public consciousness, Republican homophobic tactics may look like hypocrisy.

John McCain has repeatedly pledged to run an honorable campaign devoid of negative ads and innuendo. But even if the Republican National Committee and its candidate don't use anti-gay tactics, independent political action committees and 527s could do their dirty work for them while they ostensibly keep their hands clean. It's sleaze tactics by proxy.

Many think what brought John Kerry down was his inability to respond to crippling images propagated by the infamous 527 group Swift Vets for Justice and POWs for Truth—fellow Vietnam vets who sponsored a TV commercial citing Kerry's "phony war crime

charges" and "exaggerated claims about his own service."

This time around, those conservative complainers may help the Democrats by voicing their dissatisfaction with McCain.

He was one of the very few Republican senators who voted against the Federal Marriage Amendment in 2006.

"That has, among other things, set off social conservatives in the Republican Party against him," Pinello says.

As a result, he adds, conservative special interests may work against their own candidate:

"I do think the 527s, PACs or independently controlled organizations financed by interest groups may raise the issue that he voted against the Federal Marriage Amendment."

Blasius, however, brings us back to a sobering reality check: "We don't know how McCain is going to court the conservative vote or who he will choose as his running mate. But they're going to do whatever they can to get elected."



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Emerald Theatre Company Gets Trashy... AGAIN!

Sordid Lives, a black comedy about white trash living once again graces the Theatreworks stage this April as ETC continues its 11th season of residency.

Sordid Lives, a story told in four chapters, focuses on the untimely death of the family's matriarch, Peggy.

Poor ol' Peggy has been shacking up with G.W. and a night of whoopee has turned tragic. Now her surviving daughters must plan her funeral if they can only stop bickering long enough to decide if their dearly departed momma should be buried with her favorite mink stole.

Add a night of revenge on the behalf of G.W.'s poor cheated-on wife, Noletta, and the audience is sure to have a night full of laughs...and did we forget to mention Brother Boy, who thinks he is Tammy Wynette.

Sordid Lives plays at Theatreworks, 2085 Monroe Ave., April 3-6 and Apr. 11-13. Thursday-Saturday performances are at 8 p.m. Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m.

There will be a sing-along cos-



The cast of *Sordid Lives* left to right: Stephanie Norwood, Josiah Foster, Melissa Garrone, Floyd Brummet, Cary Vaughn, Glenda Mace, Den-Nickolas Smith, Gina Garrone, Savannah Bearden and Michael Hoots.

tume contest on Sat., Apr. 11, at midnight.

General admission is \$12, cash or check only, no credit cards. Se-

niors and students with valid ID are admitted for \$7. Reservations highly recommended. For reservations, call 722-9302.

L Word to Return for Final Season

Showtime announced Mar. 11 that *The L Word* will return for a sixth and final season, with the last eight episodes of the first- ever lesbian primetime drama set to premiere early next year on the cable network.

"It has been a privilege to do this series and tell these stories and have these characters in my life and to share them with the show's passionate fans," said Ilene Chaiken, creator and executive producer of the series. "I am thrilled that Showtime has given us this final opportunity to conclude this journey we have all

taken together."

Production will resume in early summer, said Robert Greenblatt, Showtime's president of Entertainment.

"We are enormously proud of the legacy of *The L Word*, a groundbreaking series that well surpassed its niche as a gay show," he said. "The title of the show became part

of the lexicon, and the breadth and reach of the characters and storylines are a testament to the talent of Ilene Chaiken and her incredible cast.

"We have a strong tradition of shows that move beyond the stereotypes of lesbian and gay characters, and we are grateful to everyone involved with *The L Word* who contributed to its legacy."

Save the Date!!

Saturday, July 26, 2008
Shelby Farms Chickasaw Trail
8:00 a.m.

Friends For Life 1st annual
Walk/Run Against AIDS



Baywatch Star Jaason Simmons Confirms He is Gay

Baywatch actor Jaason Simmons has revealed that he is gay in an interview in Australia.

The actor, who played Logan Fowler between 1994-97, confirmed he will wed Irish actor John O'Callaghan, who he has been partnered with for eight months.

The pair have adopted a six-year-old son from Uganda.

Speaking to *New Idea*, he said: "We're doing it (getting married) for our family and for my soon-to-be son.

"Although you don't want to typecast yourself, you have to take responsibility and ownership and move humanity forward, out of bigotry.

"Our son needs to see we can stand in front of family and loved ones who are going to support our



Jaason Simmons

union through the good times and bad."

Fly Your Flags — Many Cultures, One Community

This year's Pride Parade will take place on June 14 which is celebrated as Flag Day.

The new 100-foot flag will premiere and be dedicated at that parade.

The Nike TN GLBTF Network is Grand Sponsor; Tennessee Equality Project and Inz and Outz Cards and Gifts are Major Sponsors.

The flag will be dedicated to the memory of Gary Wilkerson, one of the founders of Mid-South Pride.

This year's theme for the parade is "Many Cultures, One Community," so it is appropriate that the flag of GLBT culture will take center stage.

Also in this year's parade will be 100 feet of the Sea to Sea flag and mementos of the retired Memphis Pride Flag.

Flags representing states, countries and cultures of all descriptions will be appropriate trimmings for this year's event and the parade will be led off by the five-flag color guard representing our locale.

Three of the five flags used were gifts from elected officials; the American flag from former Representative Harold Ford Jr., the Tennessee state flag from current Representative Steve Cohen, the Memphis city flag from Mayor W. W. Herenton.

The guard is completed by the Shelby County flag and the Rainbow flag.

A dedicated group of volunteers chaired by Vincent Astor and

spearheaded by Mike Morgan, will have completed (with improvements) a replica of the 1997 100-foot flag.

The flag is made of brightly dyed cotton fabric with new handles and webbing incorporated into the design.

The original flag served for 10 years and appeared in nine parades. Its last appearance was in last year's pride parade in St. Louis. It is hoped that the new one will last much longer.

Miki Zulewski has been a lead seamstress, and the operation has taken place in the First Congregational Church Fellowship Hall.

And the old 100-foot flag?

Well, 50 feet of it is still intact and available to be used whenever and wherever called for.

Memento sections were created for MGLCC, Holy Trinity, First Congregational and the three major sponsors of the new flag.

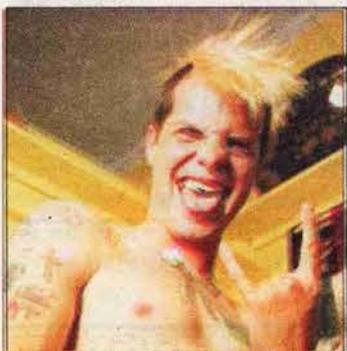
A special section will always be carried in the Memphis Pride Parade and a special framed archive banner will hang in the Archives at the MGLCC.

A commemorative banner was given by MSP to Russell Olivera Jr., founder of QBliss, which will appear at events all over the country. A swatch was signed by participants at the Prides of the Southeast (POSE) conference and passed on to the next host city. Our original flag will now fly in many places.

Big Brother's Porn Performer and American Idol's Stripper Sent Packing

It wasn't a good day to be a gay entertainer on reality television as gay porn performer James Zirkand was evicted from *Big Brother 9* and male stripper David Hernandez got the boot from the seventh season of *American Idol*. Much ado has been made about both contestants' former career paths, and in the end, it cost one of them the chance to win the show.

On *Big Brother: Till Death Do Us Part*, it was announced that the couples were now splitting up and each individual would be playing the game separately. After much persistence and some dealing by under-the-radar player Shelia Kennedy, James was put up on the block and voted out by all of the remaining players except his former partner Chelsia Hart.



Big Brother's James Zirkand

Zirkand entered the house as a straight man looking for love in the special matchmaker's edition of *Big Brother*, but earlier this season *Dirtyboyvideo.com* revealed Zirkand's gay porn past when it began promoting videos of him on its home page.

CBS and Endemol Productions, who do extensive background checks on participants, have so far made no statements about the contestant's interesting past, but news outlets have been spreading the story through cyberspace.

After his eviction, the players were given a new twist, and Zirkand came back into the game. After much insistence by host Julie Chen to "keep it clean," James did drop the F-bomb at the end of the

live show, which will no doubt draw another regulation violation fine for CBS.

On *Idol*, the smooth voiced David Hernandez seemed like an early favorite with flawless vocals and a mellow sound, but club owner and Hernandez's former boss Gordy Bryan informed the Associated Press that David had worked for several years at Arizona — based Dick's Cabaret as a male stripper.

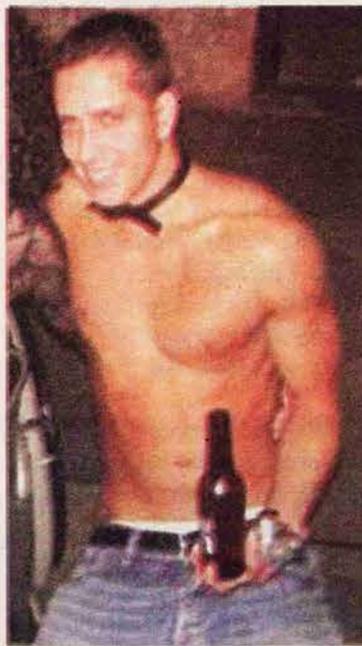
The show's producers seemed less concerned about Hernandez's past, telling *TV Guide* magazine, "We've had strippers on the show before... We're never judgmental about people who do things like that. If it were some sort of heavy porn, then maybe we'd have to take action. But certainly not on this."

Hernandez said that he's "not ashamed of anything that I've done in my past," and that *Idol* producers were well aware of his background as a stripper in a gay club. "If they weren't comfortable with it, I wouldn't have been on the show," he told reporters.

Hernandez also said that dealing with rumors about his personal life while preparing for the show didn't affect his performance, and that he actually blames his song choice for his ultimate demise.

"I did a pretty good job of blocking it all out," he said. "If this is the worst thing that comes out in my career, then I'm pretty set to go."

"This has actually been good for me because I've learned how to have a thick skin and still get onstage and perform for 35 million



American Idol's David Hernandez

people."

In the end, however, America made the ultimate decision when they decided to keep wannabe country singer Kristy Lee Cook, who gave a performance that show judge Simon Cowell called "horrendous," over Hernandez in the first week of eliminations.

Ready or Not, Gay Robot is Coming to TV

Comedy Central has announced the new projects they're developing, and are not shy about the demographic they're targeting:

"We first and foremost went looking for things that are very funny and appeal to young guys. There are all kinds of formats that can take that form. And we've identified a wide range of talent that can appeal to our young demo."

What this means is that we can look forward to such gems as an Untitled Snoop Dogg project, *America's Biggest Idiot*, plus the resurrection of the better off dead *Gay Robot*.

For those who don't know, *Gay Robot* was a pilot shot over two years ago that was turned down by every network, but became a huge hit when it was posted online.

Now Comedy Central has ordered a new pilot, in animation form, that will consist of two 11-minute segments.

Hopefully, the new pilot will be less groan-inducing than the live action version, which featured lines about "semen smoothies"

and "lavender scrotums" and a main character that was gay because his inventor "spilled a wine cooler on him." This kind of humor can be funny and edgy when done well (like in *Drawn Together* or *South Park*), or it can be offensive and crass, which is the case with *Gay Robot*.

The fact that it's produced by that *Chuck & Larry* guy does not bode well.



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Get Ready for Gay Day With Girls in Wonderland

A new generation of Disney heroines are ready to claim the "Kingdom that Walt Built."

South Florida's top women's party producers, Alison Burgos and Pandora Events, expect more than 7,000 members of the estrogen set to attend their eighth annual Girls in Wonderland extravaganza June 4-8 in central Florida. The events, hosted by MTV star Dani Campbell (*A Shot at Love with Tila Tequila*), coincide with the 18th annual Gay Day at Walt Disney World and raise funds for the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

"This will definitely be our most diverse year," said Girls in Wonderland co-founder Alison Burgos. "We're proud that Orlando's LezGo Events and Girlz Like Us are supporting us so that we can deliver a lineup with appeal to women of all ages."

The 2008 soiree builds on the previous successes and ramps up the action another notch. That means more bikini-clad bodies at the pool parties, more gyrating forms on the dance floor for the signature House of Blues party, and more hot performances courtesy of the She Rock All-Star Concert. Women looking for a relaxed evening will find their groove at the

new Polynesian Luau or in front of the poolside big screen for a "Dive In" lesbian movie night.

To accommodate the growing crowds, there are two host hotels: the bustling Courtyard Marriott, ground zero for pool party action, the welcome reception, movie screening and luau; and its laid-back neighbor, the Fairfield Inn, site of a new pool party.

Both hotels are conveniently located at Marriott Village, 8623 Vineland Ave., Lake Buena Vista, and will have shuttle service to off-site events. Rates start at \$93 a night; use the reservation code "Girls in Wonderland" when booking.

Proceeds from the Girls in Wonderland weekend benefit NCLR, a national legal resource center that advances the rights and safety of lesbians and their families through litigation, public policy, and education. NCLR also provides representation and resources to gay men and bisexual and transgender individuals on key issues that support lesbian rights.

For more information, visit www.girlsinwonderland.com.

Lesbian Mom Fights for Justice in Partner's Death

A year ago Janice Langbehn's partner of nearly 18 years was pronounced brain dead after being stricken with a brain aneurysm. While at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami she was met with prejudice and apathy.

Langbehn and her family were consistently denied visitation and didn't see her partner, Lisa Pond, until many hours after she was admitted. Lambda Legal has officially sent a notice of intent to sue to the hospital on Langbehn's behalf.

"The treatment that Janice and her children received was unethical and discriminatory," said Beth Littrell, staff attorney for Lambda Legal. "This letter puts them on notice that we are advocating for justice for Janice and her children."

While on a family cruise leaving from Miami, Lisa, a healthy 39-year-old, suddenly collapsed. She was rushed to Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital with her partner Janice and three children following close behind.

There, the hospital refused to accept information from Langbehn about her partner's medical history.

Langbehn was informed that she was in an antigay city and state, and she could expect to receive no information or acknowledgment as family.

A doctor finally spoke with Langbehn telling her that there was no chance of recovery.

Other than one five minute visit, which was orchestrated by a Catholic priest at Langbehn's request to perform last rites, and despite the doctor's acknowledgement that no medical reason existed to prevent visitation, neither Langbehn nor her children were allowed to see Pond until nearly eight hours after their arrival.

Soon after Pond's death, Langbehn tried to get her death certificate in order to get life insurance and Social Security benefits for their children. She was denied both by the State of Florida and the Dade County Medical Examiner.

Man Arrested in Same Sting as Craig Acquitted

A Minneapolis man arrested in the same airport bathroom sex sting as U.S. Sen. Larry Craig has been acquitted.

Vince Tuzon, 39, used a similar argument to Craig in pleading not guilty. Tuzon claimed he wasn't guilty because the police officer initiated the foot-tapping.

On Mar. 7, a Hennepin County jury agreed with Tuzon.

"My client really feels that he was set up," defense lawyer Jeffrey Dean said.

"He stopped in to use the restroom. He was using the toilet when he was essentially bombarded with overtures."

The Metropolitan Airports Commission was "disappointed" with the ruling, spokesman Pat Hogan said.

"Every case is different, and we respect the jury's decision," he said. "That's just the way this one went."

The sting operation was conducted at a busy restroom in the Lindbergh Terminal of the Minne-

apolis-St. Paul International Airport from May to August last year. It went along relatively quietly until it was divulged in August that Craig, a Republican from Idaho, was cited on June 11.

Craig initially pleaded guilty to misdemeanor disorderly conduct and paid \$575 in fines. But he said that he pleaded guilty to try and keep the incident out of the media and has since asked the state Appeals Court to let him withdraw the plea.

Craig claims in his appeal that the state's disorderly conduct law is flawed. Airport lawyers say his guilty plea should stand. In that appeal, Craig's lawyers argue that police initiated the contact, which is the argument Tuzon used to be acquitted.

"My client feels that the police conduct was very abusive, and he was entrapped and set up," Dean

said. Dean said Tuzon went into the restroom on July 5 to use the bathroom and was in a stall with undercover police on both sides.

The lawyer said one officer and Tuzon began tapping feet, "which led to my client finally doing what the officer communicated my client to do, which was look into his stall, at which point they arrested him. ... We feel that that is misconduct and abusive and this would've never happened had the police never started all of this."

The lawyer used a similar argument with another client, who was found guilty. Dean is appealing that case.

Hogan said Dean's two clients are the only men of the 41 cited with indecent conduct in the operation to take their cases to trial.

"Nearly all of them have already been settled," Hogan said.

Lambeth Invitation 'Not Possible' for Robinson

The House of Bishops was informed March 10 that full invitation is "not possible" from the Archbishop of Canterbury to include Bishop Gene Robinson of New Hampshire as a participant in this summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops.

Robinson, addressing the House, urged the other bishops of the Episcopal Church to participate fully in the conference, and thanked all who are willing to "stay at the table."

Robinson told the House that he respectfully declined an invitation to be present in the conference's "Marketplace" exhibit section.

Robinson confirmed for ENS

that he plans to be in Canterbury during the July 16-August 3 once-a-decade gathering, but not as an official conference participant or observer.

Word about the invitation came in a report from three U.S. bishops, speaking in the House's late-afternoon session, who worked with Lambeth Palace staff to seek provision for Robinson's participation

in the conference. The House of Bishops was in session through March 12 at Camp Allen in Navasota, Tex.

Robinson, an openly gay man ordained a bishop in 2003, was informed last year that an invitation to the Lambeth Conference would not be extended to him at that time.

Miss. Lawmakers Go After Gay Adoptive Parents

A bill in the Mississippi state Senate would bar cohabiting unmarried couples, including gay and lesbian couples, from adopting children.

The proposed law is an effort to close a loophole that allows gay couples to adopt. WLBT-TV in Jackson reports that the state's department of human services has 533 children in its custody who are eligible for adoption. Current guidelines for a prospective adoptive parent are that he or she must be either single — sexual orienta-

tion is not mentioned — or married for at least two years, 21 years old and have sufficient income and insurance to care for a child.

"We're talking about taking a child and putting them into an environment where they are taught habits and exposed to lifestyles that are clearly detrimental to the child," state representative Phillip

Gunn told WLBT in reference to adoption by gay couples.

Gunn said, however, he does not want to prevent singles from adopting. "Obviously there are a lot of single people out there with a lot of love to give an adoptive child, and we certainly don't want to prohibit that, and that is not a bad way to raise a child," he continued.

Most Tennesseans Disapprove of Gay Marriage

Gay marriage is still unpopular among Tennesseans, according to the latest MTSU poll.

Sixty-six percent of those surveyed are against allowing homosexuals to get married. Only 24 percent approve.

Dr. Ken Blake, MTSU director of Communication Re-

search, says those figures have held fairly steady for the last five years.

"The strength of Tennesseans' evangelical beliefs—measured by a 0-5 index composed of

questions about being born again, evangelizing others, belief in the Rapture, and degree of biblical literalism—is key to these findings," Blake says.

LETTERS

Gaze would love to hear from you!

Here are the ground rules: Letters should be as short as reasonable and typed if possible. Although names may be withheld on request, all letters should be signed and include a phone number for verification. E-mail screen names may be used, but will be verified by return e-mail. Anonymous letters will not be printed. All letters are subject to editing for spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, every effort will be made to maintain the original intent of the writer.

Send your letters to info@gazememphis.com or to Gaze, 3434 Philsdale Ave., Memphis, TN 38111.

We Are the Champions

When was the last time you were dissed after sharing a positive experience when volunteering for a project or event? Examples of volunteerism may be handing out flyers for an upcoming TEP (Tennessee Equality Project) event, coming to Advancing Equality Day or doing make-up for a charitable fashion show.

How in the world can someone take your very positive experience and put a bad spin on it. Some say you are bragging for your good deeds or maybe just taking credit yourself for a successful project. Do not be discouraged by the naysayers! Be challenged by your "bad" members. We continue to push through your good work and the LGBT community as well as the community at large. Let our volunteers continue to shine during our time and let others know you are a TEP member and make them jealous! Especially those who say you are doing something for "credit" or

recognition. After joining in and actually participating in a project, event or a TEP e-mail Blast initiative, maybe they will feel compelled to share their positive experience as well, and ask others to be a part of something rewarding.

The bottom line TEP member is this—be a champion for the cause! It is OK to take credit, share your good works on behalf of TEP and other personal projects. The key reason for TEP's growing membership is the support of people like you, opening these e-mails each week and forwarding them to friends and family. Let us take credit for this! If you are a TEP member, please send this message on and ask a couple of your friends to do the same. And finally, say "no" and take credit for being a key reason for TEP's growth. Thank you, Windy Ford, TEP Lobbyist

Friends For Life Teams with Memphis Area Legal Services

Persons affected by HIV/AIDS often experience a number of legal issues that can be stressful to manage without appropriate assistance.

Friends For Life (FFL) and Memphis Area Legal Services (MALS) have maintained a collaborative relationship for several years in which a representative of Memphis Area Legal Services comes to Friends For Life twice per month to discuss legal issues with persons infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS.

The service is free, but an appointment is required. To schedule an appointment to meet with the MALS representative, call Windy Nicholson, FFL's Wellness University coordinator, at 272-0855,

extension 237.

A free legal clinic will be sponsored by the Memphis Area Legal Services on Sat., Apr. 12, from noon to 4:30 p.m.

The clinic will be conducted at First Congregational Church at 1000 S. Cooper and will deal with issues such as advance directives, employment law issues and Social Security disability.

This clinic is not specifically designed for persons living with HIV/AIDS, and the information presented will be appropriate for all persons.

Tips on Coming Out Gay to Kids

What could be more emotionally terrifying than telling your kids you are gay or lesbian?

By Patricia Cheney

For those of us fortunate enough to have raised our kids in a two-mom or two-dad family, there is really no need to do this. But for those of us who were formerly married and had children, the issues are much different.

There may be a distressed or even hostile spouse involved. Children may be older and dealing with their own burgeoning sexuality. The added burden of divorce may compound the stress. Even so, coming out to the kids is one of the most important and sensitive issues you will face.

Generally, the younger your kids are when you come out, the better. Younger kids are more resilient and have not yet had a chance to develop many of the prejudices that teens or young adults have absorbed from society.

When you do come out, be ready to answer any questions your child might have as honestly as possible. Make sure you give age-appropriate information.

Ask your spouse to give you the

courtesy to come out to your kids. It is much better if you do it rather than having them learning it from someone else.

Have a support system in place if things do not go well. Suggestions are reading material, a therapist, or resources on the COLAGE organization website.

If your child does not seem to handle the information well, make sure you meet with the school counselor and let them know what is happening. Also ask them to watch for bullying, if you are in a small community and word has gotten out.

If your child does become upset, give him time to process this big piece of news. Many times after they take a few days to think about it, they will realize you have been a good parent and your sexuality does not matter in your relationship with them.

Be calm and confident when you speak. The more accepting you are of yourself, the more accepting they will be of you.

There are plenty of success stories about coming out to kids. Keep

a positive attitude and do reading on the subject first to prepare yourself. Talk to others who have gone through this experience successfully. Chances are you will feel much better when you no longer have to hide this part of yourself from your child. When handled properly, your relationship with your child will likely be strengthened by the honesty you show and your faith in their ability to handle information.

Good luck!

This article was written by Pat Cheney, MBA, a life coach specializing in coming out in adulthood and mixed orientation marriage issues. Cheney works with gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders who are transitioning out of marriages or are coming out in midlife. Her approach is balanced and sensitive to the difficulties of midlife transitions. Cheney's coaching practice is located on the web at www.discoveringpride.com. Additional articles on this topic are available at her blog, discoveringprideblog.wordpress.com.

Groups Encourage Black LGBT Political Leadership

While Cambridge, Mass., can boast of having had two successive African American, openly gay mayors, the reality is that there are just a handful of out black elected officials in the United States.

Recently, for instance, Connecticut state Rep. Jason Barrien came out publicly, making him the first black, openly gay state legislator in the country.

The dearth of openly gay African American elected officials inspired the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Institute (GLLI)—the educational and research arm of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund—to partner with the National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS) in an effort to boost the numbers of gay black political leaders.

The two organizations have created the Bayard Rustin Award, which will honor outstanding contributions to the field of research on the topic of LGBT African Americans in electoral politics. NCOBPS will hand out the first cash prize to the award winner at its annual conference in 2009.

The award is named for Bayard Rustin, the openly gay, African American civil rights leader who helped organize the 1963 March on Washington where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech. Rustin was relegated to a behind-the-scenes role in the civil rights movement after opponents attempted to use his sexual ori-

entation to discredit the movement.

Denis Dixon, vice-president of communications for the GLLI and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, said the creation of the award is part of a trend in the LGBT movement toward diversity. "There are a lot of organizations with a lot of staff that is pretty white," Dixon observed. "And I think that all of us in the movement are looking for ways to not only diversify our leadership, but diversify the constituency that we serve." While the number of openly gay elected officeholders who are people of color is a respectable 11 percent of the 410 out officials currently serving across the country, Dixon noted that few of them are African American. "As one of the major minority groups in the country, they're really underrepresented," he said.

"I think one of the things that will be interesting to see is if we see research coming out of this that just measures attitudes in the black gay community about whether or not they're being represented, whether or not they participate in the electoral process and if they don't, why not and if they do, what draws them into that, what barriers do they see,"

Dixon said. Right now, he said, there is no such data.

Though he works for an organization whose mission is to help elect openly LGBT candidates, Dixon said he had no theories on why there are so few black, gay elected officials. "I've heard theories that it is harder to be openly LGBT in the African American power structure, and I don't know whether that's the case or not," said Dixon. "But if it is, we need to figure out what those barriers are and then work at resolving that."

In the meantime, the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund is partnering with the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) to present a first-ever candidate campaign training aimed specifically at people of color.

"We've moderated what we normally do on our candidate campaign training to include perspectives from African American political professionals and others who can come in and train folks on how to run [and] answering the question of whether there are special issues if you're openly gay and black and you're running that need to be addressed if you decide to take on a campaign or run yourself."

Interpreting a Landmark Ruling as Big Step Toward Gay Marriage

When a New York appellate court ruled that out-of-state same-sex marriages were legal there, it marked a major step in the establishing gay marriage in this country.

But the victory, while certainly another step in the right direction, was maddeningly ironic: New York queers who want to get married still can't do so in their home state—which will, however, recognize them if done elsewhere.

Be warned, however, before moving to Massachusetts or planning a honeymoon in one of the enlightened countries that let same-sexers walk down the aisle: there are serious implications to consider. A number of activists, legal hawks and policy wonks differ as to what the decision means in the big picture—and where we go from here.

The Feb. 1 decision, *Martinez v. County of Monroe*, by a New York appellate court examined the case of a lesbian couple residing in New York who had a 2004 marriage in Canada and sought a divorce.

The decision compelled New York state law to recognize the marriage and, in doing so, set the stage for the couple to proceed with their divorce (as opposed to simply declaring their union null and void). Prior to the ruling, their divorce could not take place, as their marriage carried no weight under state law.

Paul Cates, director of the public education for the ACLU's LGBT Project, clarifies how the essence of this decision differs from earlier unsuccessful lawsuits that asked New York courts to say that barring same-sex couples was unconstitutional. This case, rather, asked if the state must recognize a marriage that took place outside the state.

"That issue is a lot easier for them to interpret," Cates said, "because New York recognizes marriages from out of state. It's a very different legal standard."

Even as the decision advances the cause in one respect, it also creates a baffling double standard. "It points out that there is no logical reason why people cannot be married in the state," said Molly McKay, spokesperson for Marriage Equality USA. "What possible public policy could be served by requiring its same-sex citizens to go outside of the state, get married and come back in?"

State Laws a Patchwork

Still, the ruling obligates New York to respect marriages performed elsewhere and acknowledges that other states and countries have valid same-sex unions in the eyes of the law.

But there's a big difference between recognizing something in a state—or even many states—and recognition at the federal level. "Even in Massachusetts," McKay said, "gays and lesbians are treated 'equally' in the exclusion from federal relationship protections." That's 1,138 rights automatically bestowed upon people by marriage.

Another inequality—or absurdity—created by the patchwork of state laws and judicial rulings comes to the fore when you realize that Massachusetts has a law (virtually unknown until enforced by then-Gov. Mitt Romney) that says that unless you live there, you can't go there and get married. That creates the scenario where same-sex couples that live in Massachusetts can enjoy state-conferred marriage benefits when they move to New York. But a New York couple can't employ the services of a Boston Justice of the Peace without relocating.

The New York ruling means that couples can go to most of Canada, Spain, the Low Coun-

tries or Scandinavia, and return to have those marriages recognized.

Cates stops far short of encouraging New Yorkers to marry elsewhere, because, "There's a chance that the court of appeals will not agree with the Rochester court." That, plus the sobering fact of long-term consequences for those whose marriages conducted up north eventually go south.

Canada has a one-year waiting period for divorce. "If the court of appeals disagrees," Cates noted, "you could be stuck in a

situation where you'd have to move to Canada and live for a year."

Does this precedent mean that gay marriage, now legal in at least one state, will eventually be recognized everywhere?

David Buckel, Marriage Project director for Lambda Legal, believes so. "The question is, how long is it going to take?" he asks.

McKay agrees: "From all different angles around the marriage equality debate, all roads are pointing to marriage equality being the inevitable result," despite

the "patchwork quilt of relationship protections for same-sex couples." When people think of themselves as U.S. citizens, they expect their rights and protections will be consistent across the nation.

Yet Cates believes the New York decision means that other courts in other states are going to be asked this question sooner or later. Now that recognizing out-of-state marriages is a matter of law in New York, those arguing in other states can cite it as precedent.

Gaze Memphis GLBT Resources Directory

The Memphis GLBT Resources Directory is printed as a public service, and its listings are free. Agencies and businesses listed herein have not been charged. All phone numbers are area code 901 unless otherwise noted. To be listed, send an e-mail to info@gazememphis.com (* Indicates Gaze distribution points.)

ADULT BOOKSTORES

Airport Bookmart: 2214 Brooks Rd E., ☎ 345-0657.
Cherokee Adult Book Store*: 2947 Lamar, ☎ 744-7494.
Fantasy Warehouse ☎ 791-793 North White Station, ☎ 683-9649.
Getwell Book Mart: 1275 Getwell, ☎ 454-7765.
Paris Adult Entertainment Center: 2432 Summer ☎ 323-2665.
Tammy's # 2: 2220 East Brooks Rd, ☎ 396-9050.
Tammy's # 3: 1617 Getwell Rd, ☎ 744-4513.
Tammy's # 4: 5937 Summer Ave., ☎ 373-5760.

BARS / RESTAURANTS

901 Complex*: 136 Webster St., ☎ 522-8459
Backstreet*: 2018 Court Street, ☎ 276-5522.
Buns on the Run*: 2150 Elzey, ☎ 278-BUNS
Crossroads*: 1278 Jefferson, ☎ 272-8801.
Lorenz/Aftershock*: 1528 Madison, ☎ 274-8272
Mary's*: 405 N. Cleveland, ☎ 725-7334, www.mary'smemphis.com
Nocturnal*: 1588 Madison Ave., ☎ 726-1909
Metro Memphis*: 1349 Autumn, ☎ 274-8010.
One More*: 2117 Peabody, ☎ 278-MORE
Paragon Lounge*, 2865 Walnut Grove Rd., ☎ 320-0026

The Pumping Station*: 1382 Poplar, ☎ 272-7600.
The Jungle*: 1474 Madison, ☎ 278-0521

CARDS AND GIFTS

Inz & Outz*: 553 South Cooper, ☎ 728-6535.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Alliance: Leather/Levi club · Box 42174, Memphis 38174.
BGALA (Students for Bisexual, Gay & Lesbian Awareness): ☎ 729-3915.
Bluff City Sports Association: Box 41803, Memphis 38174-1803, ☎ 682-9928.
Brothers & Sisters Bowling League ☎ 465-4371 Richard Andrews.
Cotton Pickin' Squares: Gay/Lesbian Square Dance Club · Meets Thurs., Holy Trinity Community Church, 685 S. Highland ☎ 272-2116.
Friends For Life-HIV Resources: HIV/AIDS Service Organization · 43 N. Cleveland, Memphis 38104, ☎ 272-0855
Holy Trinity United Church of Christ*: Worship Service: Sun. 11 am & 7 pm; Bible study: Wed. 7 pm; 685 S. Highland, ☎ 320-9376.
Integrity Memphis: Meets the 3rd Tues., Healing Service/Eucharist, 6 pm; Dinner, 6:45 pm, \$4; Meeting 7:30 pm · c/o Calvary Episcopal Church, 102 N. 2nd, ☎ 525-6602.
Living Word Christian Church: Worship Service Sun. 9:30 am 1015 S Cooper, ☎ 485-0949.
Memphis Area Gay Youth (MAGY): PO Box 241852, Memphis, TN 38124, ☎ 335-MAGY for info; website: www.magyonline.org
Memphis Center for Reproductive Health: 1462 Poplar Ave, ☎ 274-3550.
Memphis Gay & Lesbian Community Center*: (MGLCC): 892 S. Cooper, Memphis 38104, ☎ 324-4297.
Mid-South Pride, Inc.: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgendered Pride Events · Mail: 111 S. Highland, Suite

322, Memphis 38111; Office: 685 S. Highland, 3rd Floor, Memphis 38111; ☎ 901-414-2197, Fax: 901-592-6635. Website: www.midsouthpride.org, E-mail: info@midsouthpride.org
Memphis TransGender Alliance: TV/TS support group · c/o Barbara Jean Jasen, Box 11052, Memphis, TN ☎ 38111-0052.
Mystic Krewe of Memphis United: 41 S. Century, Memphis 38111.
National Organization for Women (NOW): Box 40982, Memphis 38174, ☎ 578-3286 or e-mail at memphisnow@hotmail.com.
Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (P-FLAG): Box 172031, Memphis 38187-2031, ☎ 761-1444.
Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (P-FLAG): Jackson, TN 38305, ☎ 1-901-664-6614 for information, e-mail: burtren@aeneas.com
Tennessee Leather Tribe: Gay men's/women's leather org. 1568 Rolling Hills Dr., Memphis 38127-5409, ☎ 357-1921.
The Mid-Towners Bowling League ☎ 323-3111 - Linda Ethieron, 342-4630 - James Bailey.
Tsarus: Leather-Levi club · Box 41082, Memphis 38174-1082.
U of M Students for Bisexual, Gay & Lesbian Awareness (BGALA): BGALA c/o Office of Greek Affairs, Box 100, U of M 38152, ☎ 278-5825 email: bgala@cc.memphis.edu.
Univ. of Miss. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Assoc.: GLBA, PO Box 3541, Univ., MS 38677, ☎ 662-234-1258 email: glba@olemiss.edu, website: www.olemiss.edu/orgs/glba.
WAC (Woman's Action Coalition): PO Box 1203, 3566 Walker, Memphis 38111 ☎ 678-3339.

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Queer Notes

The past month has been full of political mud slinging and name calling, and that was just between the two remaining Democratic presidential candidates! John McCain has wrapped up the GOP nomination, but Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama are still fighting for the Democratic nomination.

Political Commentary
by Jim Maynard

After losing 12 straight primaries and caucuses, Hillary Clinton rebounded with primary victories in Ohio, Texas and Rhode Island. Obama won Mississippi and Vermont, but ended up winning the Texas caucuses and more delegates from Iowa, cutting Clinton's delegate gain to only about 9. Obama still leads in overall delegates (1,527 to Clinton's 1,428). Obama leads in pledged delegates won in primaries and caucuses (1,328 to 1,190), but Clinton has a small lead in "super delegates" (238 to 199).

The Mississippi primary was one of the most racially polarized in the country. Obama got 90 percent of the black vote but only about a quarter of the white vote. Rush Limbaugh urged his audience to cross over and vote for Hillary Clinton in the Democratic Primary. According to exit polls, about 12 percent of the voters in the Democratic primary were Republicans and over 70 percent voted for Clinton. Limbaugh's campaign to boost Hillary Clinton was more successful in Ohio, where she won by about 10 percent.

It is now impossible for either candidate to win the 2,024 required to win the nomination by the Democratic convention in August, and the super delegates will probably decide the winner. Will they go with Obama, the candidate who has won the most states, votes and pledged delegates, or anoint Hillary Clinton?

One of those "super delegates" got a lot of special attention. Jason Rae (21) is not only the youngest super delegate, he is also gay. He was courted by both candidates, including personal calls and dinner with Bill and Chelsea Clinton, but he decided to support Obama.

LGBT voters got a lot of special attention in Texas and Ohio. Obama's campaign launched an unprecedented ad campaign targeting gay voters, and the Clinton campaign also worked to gain the support of LGBT voters and political leaders in those states. Obama even won over a gay Republican! Noel Freeman, the (former) president of the Houston Log Cabin Republicans, joined the Obama campaign and switched parties! If Barack Obama can unite gay Republicans, like Andrew Sullivan, and gay progressives like myself, I think that says a lot about how he could win the general election.

After switching to Obama after John Edwards dropped out, I have said that Clinton or Obama would be great candidates and I will support the winner. However, I'm having second thoughts about Hillary Clinton. To be honest, I'm mad as hell at Hillary! For some reason, the Clinton campaign has decided to attack Obama by praising John McCain!

According to Hillary Clinton, she and John McCain are ready to be "commander in chief" and have the experience to answer a phone call at 3 a.m. in the White House, but not Barack Obama! I'm not sure if she is running for the Democratic nomination or to be John McCain's running mate! I can't remember a Democratic candidate ever endorsing the Republican candidate in the primary!

So much for a "dream ticket" of Clinton/Obama! Even House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Hillary Clinton killed that possibility by saying Obama was unqualified to be president! (Pelosi also said that the super delegates should *not* go against the popular will of the voters, meaning they should support Obama.)

According to the Drudge Report, the Clinton campaign also had a finger in getting the media to pay more attention to that picture of Barack Obama in the turban head dress in Kenya, fueling the rumors that Obama could be a Muslim or is suspect. The Tennessee Republican Party actually had a press release on their website with the picture and accused Barack "Hussein" Obama of being anti-Semitic and being associated with Louis Farrakhan.

John McCain had to denounce a conservative talk radio host, Bill Cunningham, who repeatedly referred to Barack "Hussein" Obama in an introduction at one of his rallies. Republican Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) claimed that al-Qaeda terrorists would rejoice in the streets if Barack Obama became resident.

On top of all those attacks, Obama has been in the middle of a catfight between some feminists who accuse Obama supporters of being sexist, and some African-Americans who claim that racism has done more harm to blacks. Clinton supporter, and former V.P. candidate, Geraldine Ferraro started a firestorm with her accusation that Obama had only succeeded politically because he was black, and accused his campaign of being racist!

Then Fox News and the mainstream media began showing clips of Obama's former minister, Rev. Jeremiah Wright of the Trinity United Church of Christ, preaching about how rich white people control the country and condemned the U.S. for acts of terrorism and racism. Clinton denounced Ferraro and Obama denounced Jeremiah Wright, but the catfight goes on between their supporters.

Personally, I think there was more truth in Jeremiah Wright's comments, but he stepped over the church/state line by attacking Hillary Clinton and endorsing Barack Obama. I'm opposed to any church endorsing political candidates in their pulpits. I'm afraid that Wright's charges of racism, even though there is a lot of truth in what he said, will hurt Barack Obama in the long-term.

Samantha Power, an unpaid foreign policy advisor to Obama, was forced to resign after calling Hillary Clinton a "monster" in an interview with a Scottish newspaper. The Clinton campaign returned fire by comparing Obama to Kenneth Star, the independent prosecutor who went after the Clintons in the 1990s, for demanding the Clinton release her tax returns. Nasty, nasty!

Meanwhile, the Republican nominee John McCain has been pretty much ignored by Obama and Clinton, and is getting a free ride from the media. While Obama's association with Rev. Jeremiah Wright as been carefully scrutinized by the media, John McCain's association with right-wing preachers John Hagee and Rod Parsley, among others, has been largely ignored.

John Hagee, a San Antonio televangelist, is one of several religious extremists who have endorsed John McCain. Hagee is a leader in the Christian Zionist movement who believes that the U.S. must support Israel at all costs and should invade Iran to usher in Armageddon and the second-coming of Jesus Christ. Hagee also claims that hurricane Katrina was God's judgment on New Orleans for tolerating homosexuals.

John McCain is also getting the support of Christo-fascist Rev. Rod Parsley. Parsley uses his TV program to rant against abortion, gay marriage and hate-crime laws, and is organizing an army of "Patriot Pastors" to wage a war on liberal judges and political candidates who support secularism over their goal of a theocratic takeover of the U.S. government. John McCain appeared on stage with Parsley at a campaign event in Cincinnati, Ohio, and called him a "spiritual guide."

It gets worse! In addition to his endorsements from John Hagee and Rod Parsley, John McCain has con-

tinued his pandering to the radical right by making a major speech to the ultra-conservative Council for National Policy. The CNP was founded in 1981 by the Rev. Tim LaHaye and other radical extremists, including Paul Weyrich, to form what they claimed was an alternative to the "liberalism" of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Among other things, the Council for National Policy played a major role in the Iran-Contra scandal, linking Reagan officials with the Nicaraguan contras. More recently, the council generated media attention by threatening to bolt the GOP if Rudy Giuliani won the nomination, and is pushing for a war with Iran. Looks like John McCain is their candidate!

John McCain is campaigning for less "hope" and more war. Remember, John McCain has based his political fortune on the "surge" in Iraq and staying in Iraq indefinitely, or until the U.S. "wins" the "war on terror." March 20 marked the fifth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and 4,000 dead soldiers.

The U.S. is spending \$12 billion a month on the Iraq occupation. Nobel Prize economist Joseph Stiglitz estimates that the total cost of the invasion and occupation will surpass \$3 trillion. To put this in context, for one-sixth of the cost of the Iraq "War," the U.S. could put Social Security on sound footing for more than half a century, without cutting ben-

efits or raising taxes. The U.S. national debt, which was \$5.7 trillion when Bush was appointed President by the Supreme Court, will be \$2 trillion higher because of the war (in addition to the \$800 billion increase under Bush before he invaded Iraq). This is what the election in November should be about!

Oklahoma state Rep. Sally Kern was caught on tape in a GOP meeting claiming that gays were taking over the country and were a bigger threat to the country than terrorism! In response to the avalanche of criticism nationwide, Kern stands by her anti-gay statements, and got a standing ovation from her fellow Republicans! It looks like the Republican Party will continue to try to scare voters in November with terrorism and gays.

Meanwhile, the economy is sinking! Economists are starting to use the "R" word (recession) after the collapse of the housing market, record foreclosures, rising gas prices and a falling dollar. It's all adding up to a big economic mess which should be the political death of the Republican Party, but, thanks in part to Hillary Clinton, I'm not optimistic about the Democratic Party's chances of winning in November.

(Read more Queer Notes at queernotes.blogspot.com)

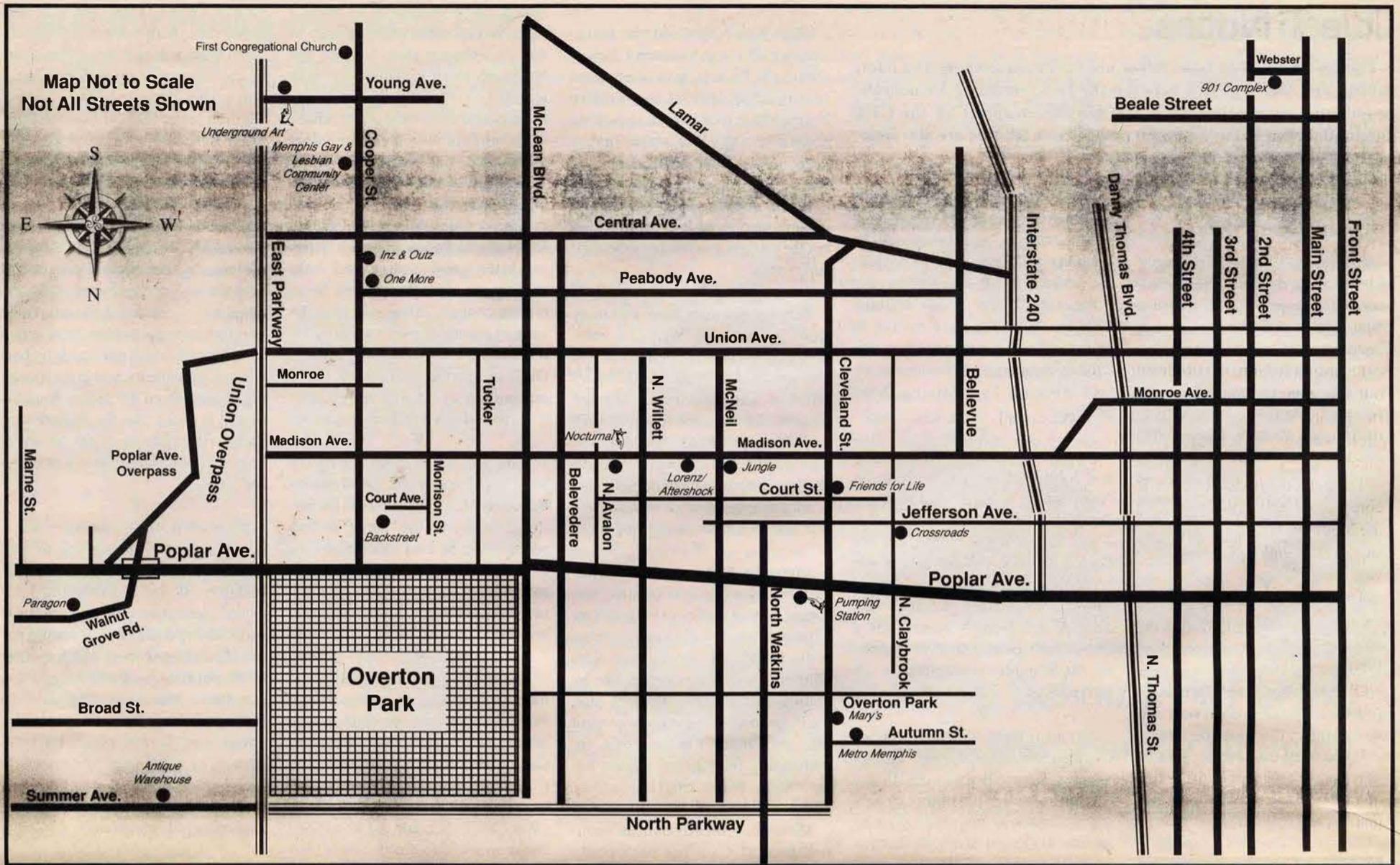
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Monthly Meeting
April 9, 6:30 p.m.
Quetzel (668 Union)



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Mar 23 • Stonewall Democrats Annual Election, 2pm, MGLCC	Mar 24 • Perpetual Transition, 7:30pm, MGLCC	Mar 25	Mar 26 • Bash Back Group, 7pm, MGLCC	Mar 27	Mar 28 • Q-Cafe: Valerie June, 7pm, MGLCC	Mar 29
Mar 30	Mar 31 • Perpetual Transition, 7:30pm, MGLCC	Apr 1	Apr 2 • Womyn's Potluck, 6pm, MGLCC	Apr 3	Apr 4 • Q-Cafe: 7pm, MGLCC	Apr 5
Apr 6 • MGLCC Board Meeting, 1pm, MGLCC	Apr 7 • Feast For Friends, 6:30pm, St. John's Methodist Church	Apr 8	Apr 9 • Tennessee Equality Project monthly meeting, 6:30, Quetzal (668 Union)	Apr 10	Apr 11 • Q-Cafe, 7pm, MGLCC • Gaze Ad Reservation Deadline for Mid-April edition	Apr 12
Apr 13	Apr 14	Apr 15 • Mid-April Gaze Production Deadline	Apr 16 • Men's Potluck, 6pm, MGLCC	Apr 17	Apr 19 • Mid-April Gaze due out	Mar 19

Idle Thoughts and Random Musings

By Allen Cook

OK. Guilty as charged.

I had hoped that my snide remarks in the January edition about none of the local krewes doing anything for Mardi Gras – not true as it turned out.

My source was an international krewe website of which at least some of the local krewes had never heard. In fairness, the website had heard of them!

Pegasus says it had its first sell-out this year — and it sold out in January. For the record, their website is www.pegasus-memphis.com.

The person who took me to task complained about the “apathy of the Memphis GLBT community to support our ball with each passing year.”

To that I simply say that keeping the media informed of your events and efforts (not necessarily by advertising them, either) would go a long way toward advancing your cause.

It’s kind of nice to see representatives of the gay community on all of the reality TV shows lately. It just seems too bad that many of

them have not turned out to be too flattering to our community.

From *Survivor*’s first winner, Richard Hatch who went to jail for income tax evasion (Who knew he had to pay income tax on that million?) to *Big Brother*’s Steve Zirkand (former porn star) and *American Idol*’s David Hernandez (former stripper at a gay club), you have to wonder where are they getting these people?

Of course, the alternative would be picking average gay people. Now how boring would that be?

My chief bitch is that these folks are perpetuating a stereotype that isn’t typical of members of the gay community. Grrrrr.

British comedian Eddie Izzard is coming to the Orpheum for a show June 3. Some of you may know him from his FX cable network show *The Riche\$* or his appearances in *Ocean’s 12* and *13*.

He will be performing his stand-up routine which, although he purports to being straight, is often done in drag.

In a dress or out, the man is funny! Tickets are \$37 and \$47 and are available at all TicketMaster outlets and the Orpheum box of-

face.

The only physical fight I’ve ever had was when someone called me “gay” — I was still in the closet at the time. So it’s not surprising to me that it’s childrens’ number one insult according to the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL).

Just so you know, “bitch” was number two.

I’ve often wished in these pages that someone would send me a copy of the “gay agenda.”

According to a letter he wrote 10 years ago, Randy Thomas, VP of Exodus International, said there isn’t one. He wrote, “I do not believe there is an American-wide gay conspiracy that is played up in by Coral Ridge (Dr. James Kennedy) and some other conservative Christian organizations to generate fear.”

I wonder what changed his mind.

Sean Penn does more than pay lip service to his role as Harvey Milk in Gus Van Sant’s movie about the slain gay rights activist.

Just ask Mark Martinez, the performance artist who plays the late cross-dressing disco singer Sylvester in the movie. He got to lock lips with the Oscar winner.

“I’m performing, and he comes onto the dance floor,” Martinez explains. “He grabs me, and he just slaps the biggest kiss on me...It felt like the kiss was forever. I’m like, Is he going to stop? I had to close my eyes. I couldn’t believe it.”

Martinez wanted to do another take, but director Gus Van Sant said, “It’s perfect, perfect, perfect.”

Gaze

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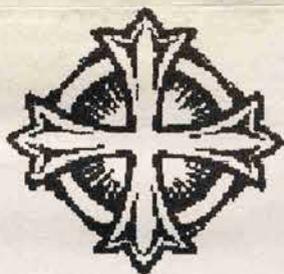
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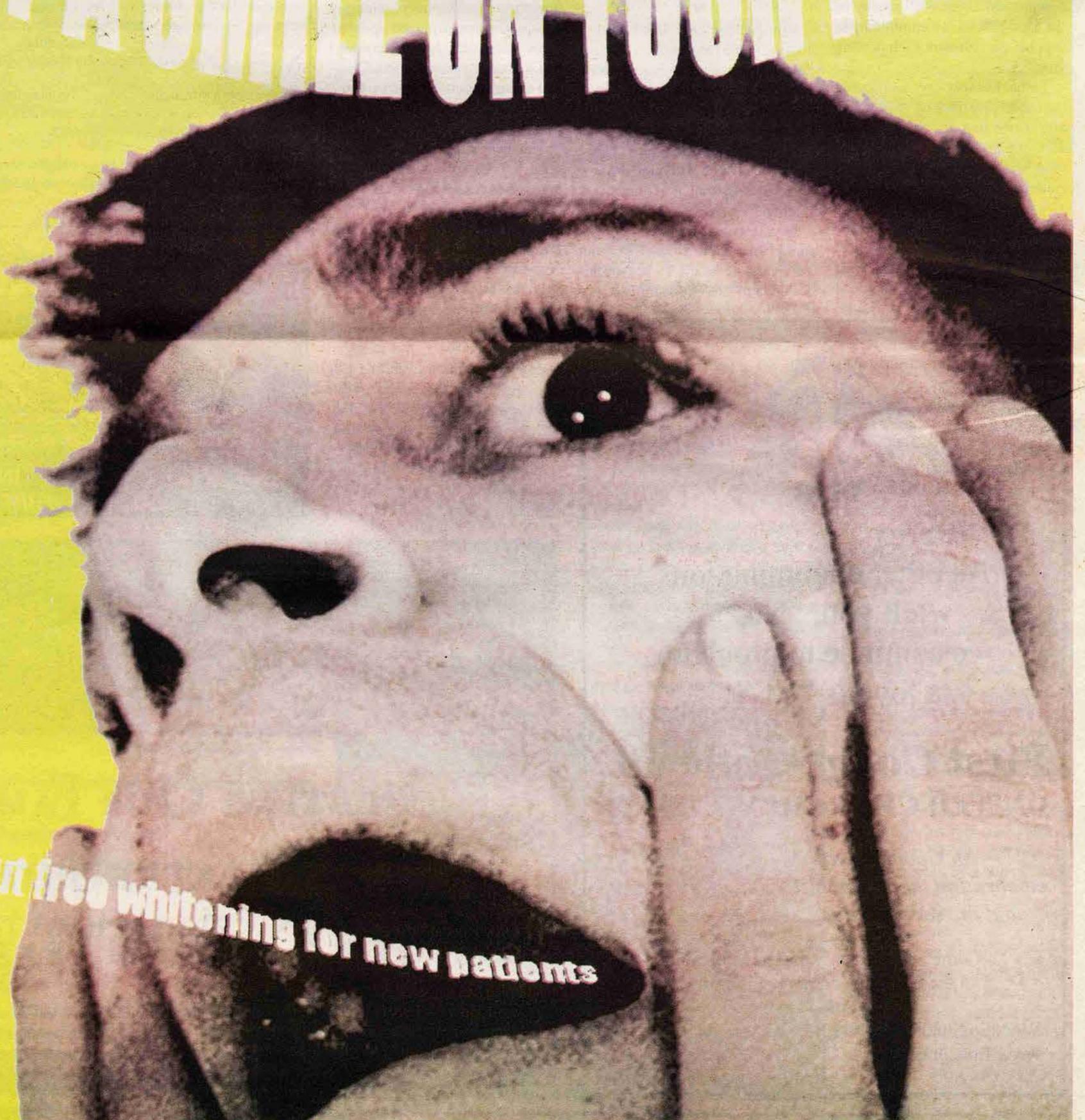
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