



AIDS Marker Project Commemorates Deaths

This year marks the seventh annual World AIDS Day Marker Project sponsored by Friends For Life in collaboration with two local churches.

The Marker Project began in 2001 when Friends For Life approached First Baptist Church leaders regarding the idea of potentially placing markers with red ribbons on the median in front of their church. The church leaders had a better idea and invited Friends For Life to place the markers on the front lawn of their church.

Several years later, the project added a new member to the project; Greater Lewis Missionary Baptist Church. This year's World AIDS Day theme, "The Power of Partnerships" was taken to a new level when Friends For Life Corporation joined with First Baptist Church,

Greater Lewis Missionary Baptist Church, Volunteer Memphis, University of Memphis architectural fraternity Alpha Rho Chi, and Gilead Science. The partnership is one that draws attention to the impact that AIDS is making in the community at one of the city's busiest intersections: Poplar Avenue and North Parkway.

The two congregations' front lawns are filled with 2,693 white stakes with red ribbons commemorating this number of deaths associated with AIDS in Shelby County. Friends For Life Executive Director Dr. Ricci Hellman states, "While there will

be 2,693 red ribbons visible, this is not including the countless number of persons who are affected by HIV and AIDS in our community today. This type of partnership is exciting to see with such a diverse group working together to raise awareness about AIDS."

According to the CDC, one American becomes infected with HIV/AIDS every 15 minutes, about 1.2 million people in the U.S. are living with HIV/AIDS and over 300,000 people in the U.S. infected with HIV don't know they are infected.

'I Wouldn't Worship an Anti-gay God' — Tutu

Desmond Tutu has accused the church of being "obsessed" with homosexuality.

In a BBC radio program broadcast on Nov. 19, the Anglican archbishop emeritus said he felt ashamed of his own church for its attitude towards gay people.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner also criticised Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the leader of the world's Anglicans, for not demonstrating the attributes of a welcoming God.

"Our world is facing problems

— poverty, HIV and AIDS — a devastating pandemic, and conflict. God must be weeping looking at some of the atrocities that we commit against one another," he said.

He said the church had appeared "extraordinarily homophobic" during the time when openly gay priest Gene Robinson became the bishop of New Hampshire.

Asked if he still felt ashamed of the church's reluctance, he replied:

"If we are going to not welcome or invite people because of sexual orientation, yes. If God, as they say, is homophobic, I wouldn't worship that God."

"It is a perversion if you say to me that a person chooses to be homosexual," he said. "You must be crazy to choose a way of life that exposes you to a kind of hatred. It's like saying you choose to be black in a race-infected society."

Cross-Dressers Won't Be Ignored at McDonald's

Three men who were dressed as women took exception to being ignored at a Memphis McDonald's and attacked a Memphis McDonald's worker have been charged with assault.

Dacorian Greer, 23, Danny Mitchell, 26, and Lynn Gillespie, 27, were charged with assault and damage of property over \$500 by the Memphis Police Department.

The incident occurred on Sun., Nov. 25, after the three started a fight with Martez Brisco at the Memphis McDonald's on South Mendenhall. The three were captured and charged a day later.

According to the police report, Brisco said an argument started at the drive-up window and he decided to ignore the three.

"They come to the window, tap, tap, tap. I'm still ignoring them. I guess that just pissed them off worse," Brisco said.

The three men, dressed as women, jumped out of the car, ran into the restaurant armed with a tire

iron, and started swinging at employees, but not before they kicked off their stiletto boots, took off their hoop earrings and jackets.

"They just decided they wanted to start a fight with the crew at McDonald's here. They began to get ready to fight taking clothing off to fight," said Lt. Trevor Tisby with Memphis Police Department.

Surveillance video from the store has been turned over to the Shelby County District Attorney's office, but was not available to local TV stations who covered the story for two days.

Albert Bolton had band aids covering scratches where one of the drag queens mauled him with his fingernails.

"I was fightin' with 'em, trying See McDonald's Melee on p. 8

Ambassador Resigns Over State Dept.'s G&L Discrimination

Appointed by President Bush in 2001 to be Ambassador to Romania, Michael Guest was the first publicly gay man to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve as a U.S. Ambassador.

Then-Secretary of State Colin Powell explicitly noted the presence of and positively recognized Guest's same-sex partner, Alex Nevarez, during the swearing-in ceremony.

The Human Rights Campaign called Powell's acknowledgement of Nevarez a "small gesture that spoke volumes."

But serving as an openly-gay ambassador under the Bush administration proved not to be as pleasant as his swearing-in. Guest retired recently, and at his retirement ceremony, "he did what few people do — displayed uncommon courage and threw a rhetorical hand-grenade into his own party."

The *New York Times* reports, "Guest took Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (who was not present) to task for failing to treat the partners of gay and lesbian foreign service officers the same as the spouses of heterosexual officers."

Guest said that was the reason for his departure: "Most departing ambassadors use these events to talk



Michael Guest

about their successes... But I want to talk about my signal failure, the failure that in fact is causing me to leave the career that I love," said Guest, 50, whose most recent assignment was dean of the leadership and management school at the Foreign Service Institute, the government's school for diplomats.

"For the past three years, I've urged the secretary and her senior management team to redress poli-

See Ambassador on page 3

Iran Carries Out Execution for Juvenile Crimes

Makvan Mouloudzadeh was executed in Kermanshah Central Prison at 5 a.m. on the morning of Dec. 5, Iranian time.

Neither Mouloudzadeh's family nor his lawyer were told about the execution until after it occurred.

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) reports that despite an order by the Iranian Chief Justice to nullify his death sentence, he was put to death.

"This is a shameful and outrageous travesty of justice and international human rights law," said Paula Ettelbrick, IGLHRC's executive director.

"How many more young Iranians have to die before the international community takes action?"

Mouloudzadeh was a 21-year-old Iranian citizen who was accused of committing anal rape with other young boys when he was 13 years old.

However, at Mouloudzadeh's trial, all the witnesses retracted their pre-trial testimonies, claiming to have lied to the authorities under duress.

Makvan also told the court that his confession was made under coercion and pleaded not guilty.



On June 7, the Seventh District Criminal Court of Kermanshah in Western Iran found him guilty and sentenced him to death.

Despite his lawyer's appeal, the Supreme Court upheld his death sentence on Aug. 1.

The case caused an international uproar, and prompted a letter writing campaign by IGLHRC and similar actions by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Outrage! and Everyone Group.

Mouloudzadeh's execution came days after a panel at the UN General Assembly passed a resolution calling for a moratorium on the death penalty.

Siblings Blocked from 'Dis-inheriting' Domestic Partner of Their Gay Brother

In a potentially landmark case, San Francisco Attorney Drexel A. Bradshaw has won a case on behalf of a Gay man whose rights to inherit under California's Domestic Partner Law had been challenged by the family of his deceased domestic partner.

The deceased man's siblings had forced their brother to execute a new trust — cutting out his partner of 14 years — while the man was schizophrenic, on narcotics,

and in the final stages of battling cancer. Bradshaw's successful litigation charged that the family had attempted to unlawfully overturn the man's will while he was in not in a mental state to do so.

"This case should be a warning to certain 'blood family members' that they cannot swoop in and take away what rightfully belongs to a Domestic Partner," said Bradshaw. "Our client had been together with this man for over 14 years and had cared for and accompanied the de-

cedent to numerous surgeries and been by his side throughout his fight with cancer."

According to Bradshaw, California's landmark Domestic Partner legislation states that upon the death of a married person, one-half of the community property belongs to the surviving spouse and the other half belongs to the decedent. Bradshaw successfully argued that registered domestic partners have the same obligations and rights under law as are granted to and imposed upon spouses and that property acquired during a marriage is the community property of both spouses.

"The family of our client's dy-

ing partner used his compromised condition to try and overturn a lawfully executive will," Bradshaw continued, having argued that the man's psychiatric disorder, weakened state, and high doses of morphine show that decedent was of unsound mind and susceptible to undue influence at the time his siblings attempted to execute a new trust which, in effect, would have dis-inherited the man's domestic partner.

"During his battle with cancer, the decedent's delusions caused him to believe that he had ended his relationship with our client, which was not true, and leave the entirety of his estate to his siblings."

Friendly Skies, Friendly Fares: Anti-Gay Conservatives Miffed at 'Special Gay Deal'

A marketing promotion aimed at the GLBT market has been seized upon by anti-gay social and religious conservatives as constituting a "surcharge" imposed on the "sexually normal."

According to the Idaho Values Alliance, employees of Alaska Airlines and of Horizon Air were informed last September about a "mico-website" targeted at, as the IVA put it, "people who practice non-normative sexual behaviors" in order to provide incentives for use of their services that, IVA says, are "unavailable to those who are sexually normal."

While this is not appreciably different from many other promotional packages designed to appeal to specific demographics within a market, the IVA hastened to characterize the offer of a discount to GLBT travelers as "in essence, a 10 percent penalty for the same trip for being, well, sexually normal."

However, the IVA also added, "But it's not too late: Switch your sexual orientation from heterosexual to anything else, and you can immediately qualify for a special 10 percent discount for your holiday travel to New York City."

The IVA website posted the address where readers could find information on the offer, including a discount offer code.

The site goes on to list travel services offered by the airlines to events ranging from The 5th Los Angeles LGBT People of Color Film Festival to The Dinah Shore Weekend in the Desert. (Paranetically, the IVA wonders, "The Dinah Shore Weekend in the Desert?" What is that all about?")

The IVA goes on to note that

Alaska Airlines has achieved a high rating from the Human Rights Campaign, which monitors corporations and services, and rates them according to how they treat GLBT customers and employees.

The IVA encourages readers to print up its report and show it to employees at the counter of Alaska Airlines or Horizon Air, and to "express your disappointment that Alaska is pushing the homosexual agenda and offering special fares that aren't available to you."

At an Alaska Air website (www.alaskaair.com/as/alaska/gaytravel/events.asp) the following text appears: "The following is a list to help you find LGBT events in cities that we serve. In addition, if a Discount Code (e-certificate) is listed, Alaska Airlines is offering more savings with a special discount to our LGBT community members."

The text continues, "When you shop at alaskaair.com, simply insert the code in the Discount Code box. The discount will show in the final total of your ticket and is for the base fare only."

At another Alaska Air web address (www.alaskaair.com/as/alaska/gaytravel/LGBT-NYC-Sale.asp), a special rate is offered for flights to New York City. No express mention is made of sexual orientation, but the text reads, "Alaska Airlines and Horizon Air are pleased to offer a 10 percent discount on your Holiday travel to

Newark/New York City."

Specifies the text, "Purchase your tickets today and complete your travel by January 6, 2008 to be eligible for this special holiday getaway. The discount is valid for travel from any Alaska Airlines or Air Horizon city."

The text continues, "To receive this discount just enter Discount Code EC06607 when you purchase your tickets at alaskaair.com."

The attention from social and religious conservatives to the "special deal" they feel homosexuals are receiving has garnered attention, and resentment, in the blogosphere.

At freerepublic.com (www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-chat/1932407/posts), a headline has been posted by a user called GOPmember that reads, "Save 10 percent on Alaska Air flights to NYC... if you're gay."

GOPmember then comments, "I wouldn't lose any sleep waiting for special 'straight rates', though."

Later on, GOPmember comments, "You know, I might consider going for the discounted rates."

"But," GOPmember continues, "I'm worried about the verification process at the ticket counter."

A user called "Question Liberal Authority" follows up on that thought, asking, "Do you have to prove you're gay, or can you just say that you're gay to get the discount? If you're bisexual, do you get double the discount, or half?"



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Report: FBI Probed 'Gay' Threats to Kill Jerry Falwell

A confidential FBI file on Rev. Jerry Falwell, obtained under the freedom of information act by the *Washington Post*, shows that the bureau launched an intensive investigation into "assassination" threats that were to be carried out by "gays in Cincinnati."

The threats were allegedly made in 1983 in phone calls to Liberty Baptist College in Lynchburg, Va., the college founded by Falwell.

One caller, according to the FBI reports, said: "I know this is true, because my brother is one of them." Another caller quoted in the reports obtained by the *Post* said: "I intend to be the one to collect that money."

A letter sent in the same year to Falwell's television ministry said: "Hoping you will die soon." The package containing the letter also had a small plastic box containing a live scorpion the FBI papers said.

The files show the FBI scrambled to find out more about Cincinnati's gay community.

The *Post* reported that the bureau sent "a confidential informant" with knowledge of gay communities in the Midwest to learn more about the city.

"Source furnished a current copy of the *Yellow Page*, June, 1983, which is Cincinnati's gay newspaper. Circulation in the Cincinnati area is shown to be 2000 copies which is not believed exaggerated," one document detailing the informant's debriefing by federal agents.

"Source stated that the Downtown vicinity of Cincinnati supports eight (8) gay bars and one lesbian bar. Source restated the general dislike for Jerry Falwell within the Cincinnati area."

The *Post* also reports that the documents show the FBI probed the history of the Stonewall riots

in New York City that led to the birth of the LGBT civil rights movement.

The newspaper said that the documents do not show that there was ever any credible assassination plot against Falwell, the founder of the Moral Majority and a frequent critic of gays.

Falwell died in May at the age of 73.

He regularly used his television ministry to attack "homosexual activists," but one of his strangest pronouncements came shortly after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington in 2001 during an appearance on the *700 Club*.

"The abortionists have got to bear some burden for this because God will not be mocked. And when we destroy 40 million little innocent babies, we make God mad. I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People For the American Way, all of them who have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say 'you helped this happen.'"

In 2003 Falwell announced that he was putting aside everything to devote his time to passage of a federal constitutional ban on gay marriage.

"I am dedicating my talents, time and energies over the next few years to the passage of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which will protect the tradi-

tional family from its enemies who wish to legalize same-sex marriage and other diverse "family" forms," Falwell said.

In the 2004 election campaign he worked with Republicans to use same-sex marriage as a wedge issue.

A week after the November election he announced he was organizing battle plans for what he called an "evangelical revolution." Falwell said that the election showed that Americans want to return to "traditional values".

He promised to roll back gay rights laws in communities across the country.

He also denounced the *Teletubbies* TV show, calling one of the characters gay.

Ironically his funeral was picketed by members of Westboro Baptist Church, led by the Rev. Fred Phelps.

Phelps, on the Westboro website, called Falwell, a "corpulent false prophet" and said he "spent his entire life prophesying lies and false doctrines like 'God loves everyone.'"

In attacking Falwell, the Westboro church says he "warmly praised Christ-rejecting Jews, pedophile-condoning Catholics, money-grubbing compromisers, practicing fags like Mel White (of Soufforce), and backsliders like Billy Graham and Robert Schuler, etc."

Pre-Eminent Lesbian Writer Jane Rule Dead at 76

Jane Rule, groundbreaking lesbian writer, died of complications of liver cancer. She was 76.

According to Wikipedia.com, Rule, who was born in New Jersey on March 28, 1931, discovered her own lesbianism upon reading the novel *The Well of Loneliness*, an early exploration of what, at the time, was regarded as an "inverted" sexuality.

Both Wikipedia and 365.com report that Rule, author of a dozen books over her lifetime, graduated in 1952 from Mills College in California which was, at the time, an all-female school. In 1956, Rule relocated to Canada, where she taught at a university. She wrote both fiction and non-fiction, and became a pre-eminent lesbian writer starting in 1964 with the publication of her novel, *Desert of the Heart*, which garnered 22 rejections before seeing print.

Giving a taste of the times, the 356Gay.com article cited a reviewer of that early work as writing, "But all the time you keep turning to the photograph of the author on the jacket and wondering how such a nice looking woman could ever have chosen so distasteful a subject."

Rule's status as an out lesbian writer, and the frank themes of her writings, helped establish her as a distinctive voice in the world of letters in Canada and then, in 1975,



Jane Rule

globally, with the publication of the bluntly-titled book *Lesbian Matters*, a non-fiction examination of same-sex attraction between women, including Rule's own lesbianism.

Canada honored Rule, inducting her into the Order of British Columbia in 1998 and, in 2007, into the Order of Canada.

Rule served in an executive capacity with the Writers' Union of Canada, and became a role model and a mentor for lesbian writers world-wide, according to the 365Gay.com article.

Rule's life partner, Helen Sonthoff, died in 2000.

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go, instead, where there is no path and leave a trail."
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ambassador

Continued from page 1

cies that discriminate against gay and lesbian employees. Absolutely nothing has resulted from this. And so I've felt compelled to choose between obligations to my partner — who is my family — and service to my country. That anyone should have to make that choice is a stain on the secretary's leadership and a shame for this institution and our country," he said.

"Unlike heterosexual spouses, gay partners are not entitled to State Department-provided security training, free medical care at overseas posts, guaranteed evacu-

ation in case of a medical emergency, transportation to overseas posts, or special living allowances when foreign service officers are assigned to places like Iraq, where diplomatic families are not permitted."

"This is not about gay rights. ... It's about equal treatment of all employees, all of whom have the same service requirements, the same contractual requirements," said Guest.

While the Bush administration has previously indicated an unwillingness to outlaw employment non-discrimination, Guest highlights the fact that the administration is also practicing it.

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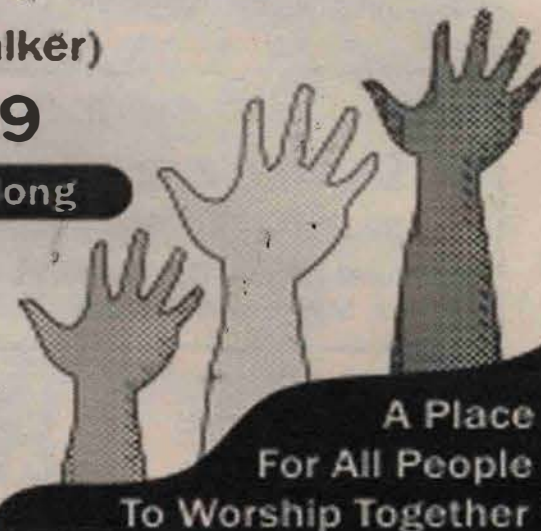
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Civil Unions on the Decline in Connecticut

Connecticut state figures show there has been a significant drop in the number of same-sex couples entering into civil unions in the past year.

After civil unions for gay couples became legal in Connecticut on Oct. 1, 2005, there were 649 civil unions during the last three months of that year.

The state Department of Public Health said that in 2006 there were 729 civil unions. However, as of the end of October this year, just 372 civil unions were recorded in Connecticut.

One state lawmaker said many same-sex couples may be holding off for marriage while the state Supreme Court considers claims that denying same-sex couples the abil-

ity to marry is unconstitutional.

The co-chairman of the legislature's Judiciary Committee, state Rep. Michael P. Lawlor, D-East Haven, said the drop-off in the number of civil unions in Connecticut doesn't surprise him.

"There was obviously a pent-up demand," Lawlor, strong advocate of gay marriage, said.

Lawlor added that there was bound to be a decline in the number of civil unions after many gay couples took advantage of the new law.

But Lawlor said he also believes "a certain number of people are

holding off for marriage." He said if gay marriage were declared constitutional by the state Supreme Court or the legislature acts to legalize it, he would expect to see another surge of same-sex couples seeking to be united.

Peter Wolfgang, a spokesman for the anti-gay marriage group, Family Institute of Connecticut, said, "In part, the novelty has worn off," Wolfgang said. "Same-sex couples in Connecticut already have most of the rights they claim they were being denied (by being unable to marry)."

Is Queen Latifah Coming Out?

Queen Latifah's latest film is called *Perfect Holiday*, and this Christmas season, she may be making us all little more merry. Speculations have been made that the 37-year-old Queen is not only planning on coming out of the closet, but is also expected to announce her engagement to longtime girlfriend Jeanette Jenkins.

Born in Newark, New Jersey, Dana Elaine Owens (a.k.a. Queen Latifah) was a gifted performer even at an early age. In the late '80s and early '90s she rose to fame as one of the most recognizable female rappers of the time and became a mainstay on the hip-hop circuit.

In 1993, she joined the cast of the Fox sitcom *Living Single* and transferred her celebrity momentum into a successful acting career. It was a role in the 1996 critically

acclaimed film *Set it Off*, in which Latifah played a lesbian, that sparked speculations she might be gay.

Earlier this month, the *New York Post* made reference to a successful actress that was planning on coming out of the closet. Although Latifah was not specifically mentioned in the article, a report on MediaTakeout.com announced it had exclusively learned that Latifah planned on announcing her engagement to her former personal trainer

and girlfriend of four years after the promotional tour of her new film.

As for now, no official confirmation has been made as to when or if the CoverGirl spokeswoman will officially come out. The couple is supposedly planning a public wedding. MediaTakeout.com states they "can't reveal our source to this story, but we can tell you that we're 100 percent sure on this one."

While speaking recently with Bill Zwecker of the *Chicago Sun-Times* about her upcoming Christmas flick, *The Perfect Holiday*, the Latifah quipped, "When you're famous these days, it's just part of the deal—unfortunately. People will make up all sorts of things that are not true. ... There ain't gonna be no wedding."

Gay Rumors Eclipse Condi's Glory Moment

It should have been Condoleezza Rice's finest hour as U.S. secretary of state: at last President George W. Bush was hosting a Middle East peace conference that she had been struggling to organize for months.

Yet when Rice's photograph appeared on the front page of America's bestselling weekly newspaper, it had nothing to do with her peacemaking efforts. She had been dragged into a *National Enquirer* article headlined "Who's Gay and Who's Not".

The article revived long-standing Washington gossip about Rice's sexuality and sparked off the usual flurry of internet chatter about her high-profile role in a Republican administration widely regarded as hostile to gays.

It also underlined the increasing friction in American politics between a high-minded media establishment disdainful of bedroom gossip and the no-holds-barred, consumer-driven world of instant internet scandal. A Google search of the words "Condoleezza" and "lesbian" that week yielded 146,000 hits.

Rice was not alone in falling victim to what the U.S. media elite invariably decries as corrupted journalistic standards but what the rest of America seems to regard as the real story in Washington: who is sleeping with whom?

The steady flow of salacious and often thinly sourced sex-related stories is causing headaches for U.S. newspaper editors, who have been bludgeoned by shrinking circulations and internet competition yet are still clinging to values described by one blogger last week as "snoozy, prissy and haughty."

The *Enquirer* described its article as "the ultimate guessing game among Hollywood fans — trying to figure out which big-name stars are gay". The report went on: "According to the buzz among political insiders, it's an open secret that ... Rice is gay."

The piece quoted an unnamed

"in-the-know" blogger as saying that during her years as provost of Stanford University in California, Rice was "completely out as a lesbian and it was not a scandal, just a reality." The paper referred to reports that in 1998 Rice bought a house with a "special friend," another unmarried woman, a filmmaker named Randy Bean.

It was far from the first time that she had been linked to lesbian rumors. In a recent biography of Rice, Glenn Kessler, the *Washington Post's* diplomatic correspondent, noted that Bean, described as a "liberal progressive," was her "closest female friend." It was Kessler who discovered from a search of property records that Rice and Bean owned a house together.

Rice does not comment on her private life, and she is not an elected official, so her sexuality has never been a campaign issue. But the gay community has long been troubled by her association with conservative Republicans opposed to gay marriage, and with evangelical Christians who regard homosexuality as a sin.

At one point last year Rice was regarded as a possible Republican candidate in the 2008 White House race. Yet most commentators agreed that she was reluctant to run, and a *Washington Post* columnist concluded that she was "the longest of long shots," as it indeed turned out.

The columnist Chris Cillizza made no mention of Rice's sexuality, and it took an internet reader named Anne Roifes to remind the *Post* that high journalistic standards sometimes miss the point.

"It is widely believed in gay circles that Condi is a lesbian," Roifes commented. "That could be one reason she will not run."



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Naked Ape Author Claims Being Gay is a State of Play

Desmond Morris, who became a bestselling author by applying zoology to explain human behaviour, has now used the technique to put forward an explanation for homosexuality.

In his latest book, *The Naked Man*, he concludes that men are "made gay" because they retain infantile or juvenile characteristics into adulthood, a phenomenon known as neoteny.

According to this theory, gay men tend to be more inventive and creative than heterosexuals because they are more likely to retain the mental agility and playfulness of childhood.

"Gays have in general made a disproportionately greater contribution to life than non-gays," said Morris, a noted artist as well as a writer, first made famous by his book *The Naked Ape*.

"The creative gay has very much advanced Planet Earth.

"The playfulness of childhood is continued with certain people into adulthood. This is very much a positive.

"Adult playfulness means that certain people, often a fairly large proportion of them gay, are more inventive and curious than heterosexuals."

However, Morris's theory was attacked by Steve Jones, professor of genetics at University College London.

"It's arts faculty science to say that gays are neotenous," he said. "It's a stupid idea. Where is the real evidence?"

Morris points to work done by Clive Bromhall, who produced some of his television programs.

"Gays do infantile behaviour in the extreme," said Bromhall, who after gaining a PhD in zoology from Oxford, left academia to form a company making educational films.

Morris, who is 80 in January, has long thought that absent fathers led to boys and young male adults becoming gay.

It is "the dominant and ever-present mother theory," he said.

"But now I'm convinced that is wrong, and that it is neoteny which makes people gay.

"Gays are using what is reproductive or creatively constructive to non-reproductive ends. This is very much a positive."

But his argument that gays are more creative than heterosexuals has its flaws. Professor Jones said: "What of somebody like Pablo Picasso, who was a hugely creative man and yet was obviously decidedly heterosexual?"

Many other creative individuals, such as fashion designers Vivienne Westwood and Mary Quant, for example, are also clearly heterosexual.

Morris, however, points to gays such as Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Tchaikovsky, Cole Porter and Oscar Wilde. T.E. Laurence, the author, Arabist and World War I hero, was homosexual and hugely creative.

British gay rights campaigner Peter Tatchell said he agreed many gays were unusually creative, but added they were characterised by being closely in touch with their emotions.

"I would also think that being gay is very much a mix of genetic factors and hormonal influence in the womb," he said. "I don't really know about this playfulness idea being carried from childhood to gay adulthood."

Most commentators, though, including Morris, Tatchell and Glenn Wilson, co-author of the 2005 book *Born Gay*, believe the so-called "gay gene" theory is discredited.

"I argued that sexual orientation is two-thirds prenatal and one-third environmental," said Wilson, who works in the Institute of Psychiatry at London University.

"I suppose the neoteny argument is not incompatible, but I haven't heard it advanced before. I would also say that gays certainly tend to gravitate towards expressive or service occupations, but I have never heard or seen evidence that they are academically better."

Morris also argues in his book that homosexuality has always polarised societies. "While many countries over the past 30 years have relaxed attitudes and less prejudice, there are eight I know of where homosexuality can still be punished by the death penalty," he said.

More Gay Encounters For Larry Craig

The Idaho Statesman reported a host of new allegations involving gay encounters by Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho), raising additional questions about Craig's statements on his sexual orientation and credibility.

After *Roll Call* originally broke the story in August about Craig's arrest in the men's room at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, the *Idaho Republican* announced he would resign from the Senate, although he appears now to be staying for the rest of the 110th Congress. Craig has appealed his misdemeanor guilty plea in the incident, and the Senate Ethics Committee is conducting its own probe of the case.

Following the initial report, *The Statesman* quickly revealed that it had done a months-long investigation into long-standing rumors about gay encounters by Craig, only to hold onto the story following an interview with Craig and his wife.

On Dec. 2, *The Statesman* reported that four more men have stepped forward to publicly declare they had gay encounters, although some of these encounters allegedly took place more than 20 years ago.

One of the men, Mike Jones,

claims that Craig paid him for sex in late 2004 or early 2005, according to *The Statesman*.

"Mike Jones is a former prostitute who told the world he had sex with the Rev. Ted Haggard last year," *The Statesman* reported. "The former Colorado Springs evangelist at first denied it but eventually confessed. Jones says Craig paid him for sex in late 2004 or early 2005."

An unidentified fifth man claimed he was approached by Craig in September 2006 in the Denver International Airport in a manner allegedly similar to that which led to the Minneapolis arrest.

Craig has denied published weekend allegations he had homosexual encounters with four men dating back to the 1980s.

Soon after *The Idaho Statesman* in Boise published an article in which the men made the allegations Dec. 2, Craig's office issued a state-

ment criticizing the newspaper, CNN reported.

"Like its previous coverage, these latest allegations are completely false and have no basis in reality," the statement said. "In fact, the paper itself states that these baseless accusations contain no definitive evidence, yet they still decided to print them anyway."

The 62-year-old was arrested in June in a sex sting at a men's washroom at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and two months later pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor disorderly conduct charge.

He has a petition before Minnesota courts to let him withdraw his plea, which he later called a mistake as he hadn't consulted an attorney.

On Aug. 28, he called a news conference to speak out against the allegations.

"I am not gay. I have never been gay," he said.

Wal-Mart Sets Record with HRC Ratings Plunge

The world's largest retailer set a record in November but not one its managers are likely to be proud of.

Wal-Mart has the ignominious distinction of having the biggest drop from one year to the next on Human Rights Campaign's annual "Buying for Equality" guide, which ranks companies and identifies their most popular brands.

The companies are rated on a scale of zero to 100 with 100 being perfect.

Wal-Mart saw its 2006 rating of 65 plummet to 40 this year. That's low enough to land in HRC's red zone (companies that rank zero to 45) which means gays and their supporters are encouraged to "strongly consider other options," according to Daryl Herrschaft, HRC's director of the Workplace Project.

The project each year oversees the shopping guide, the Corporate Equality Index and the Best Places to Work guide.

HRC doesn't encourage boycotts.

Wal-Mart's 2006 65 rating was enough to stay in the yellow HRC zone (46 to 70). Green is best (85 to 100) according to HRC's criteria.



Santa Claus visited the Holy Trinity United Church of Christ's Christmas Bazaar held on Dec. 1. We can only assume that Rev. LaPaula Turner was "nice" this year and will get all the presents on her list.

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— James Baldwin

How Bathroom Stings Entrap Gay Men

"Entrapment," "unconstitutional" and "total racket" were just some of the words used repeatedly by Triangle Foundation public policy director Sean Kosofsky to describe recent efforts of the Clayton Township, Michigan police department to troll public restrooms for illicit gay activity.

The Michigan-based gay advocacy group is conducting an investigation into a series of recent arrests, which will culminate in a lawsuit if necessary.

Kosofsky said his organization has been investigating police stings of this nature for years, but that they have increased significantly in the wake of the Larry Craig bathroom sex scandal.

"These situations have always been bad," he said, "but the fact that we just saw a wave of them all happen at once in jurisdictions where we weren't hearing about them before makes us concerned that this is a response to Craig."

Indeed, after the Idaho Republican senator was arrested for allegedly trying to solicit sex from an undercover police officer in a Minneapolis airport restroom, the American public, as well as law enforcement, began to learn more about the underground subculture of gay bathroom sex than ever. Details of the police report that flooded the media revealed a veritable secret language of oblique signals used

among participants—an arcana of foot-tapping, hand-grazing and other gestures as established as any mating ritual in the wild.

"All of the gestures that been chronicled in the police report have all reportedly been used to signal public sex between men for decades," said American University

by smiling at them, looking them up and down and engaging in sexually explicit dialogue.

"It's entrapment," he said. "They're encouraging men to break the law and then charging them with crimes they didn't commit."

He also claimed that such tactics are often employed to either fill a quota or increase police department funds.

"Having conversations about sex in public are legal," he said. "As long as it doesn't involve a minor or money, you can do it. And none of these men are involved in paying for anything or involved with

anthropology professor William Leap, who has researched male public sex for over 10 years. "It's not only the gestures that match, but the exact sequence."

But instead of lying in wait for the proper signs, Kosofsky said, plainclothes policemen conducting sting operations will often bait men

cruising minors, yet they're all being charged with crimes. Because they're so humiliated, they'll plead down to anything or pay any fine to make it go away."

The local police have maintained the ethics of their operations and insisted they weren't unduly targeting anyone.



"We've only done about two sting operations a year," said Clayton Township police chief Chuck Melki, "but I'm thinking of doing more considering I'm getting so much flak over it."

The comment was reflective of his overall attitude, as he was generally hostile and unresponsive to the line of questioning by the San Francisco *Edge*. Before prematurely terminating the interview, however, he insisted he was only responding to public complaints.

"We've had several 911 calls that people were having sex in public," he said. "We have to arrest them whether they happen to be heterosexual or homosexual. In fact, the last few arrests we made were heterosexuals. If we go there and they happen to be men on women or men on men, we have to arrest them. And we've done sting operations occasionally to curb that."

But Kosofsky said he had issued a Freedom of Information Act request for a record of the department's public complaints, which, like every jurisdiction he had previously dealt with, they were unable to produce.

"If he has public complaints, why didn't he have anything to show for it?" he asked. "I think he's just not being honest, not admitting that they have no formal complaints at all, and that these operations are homophobic."

The Triangle Foundation has managed to overturn many past convictions in court by explicating the lack of any detailed offenses in formal police reports. In 2002, the organization won a suit against the Detroit Police Department for an unprecedented wave of sex sting operations conducted in a small area of a local park. The city of Detroit settled for \$175,000 after a memo was leaked to show that the police department had boasted a \$2.4 million increase in the wake of some 770 arrests, and rubber-stamped 770 identical police reports in order to justify it. The statute they had used to conduct the arrests, called Annoying Persons, was ruled unconstitutional and overturned.

"We were vindicated," Kosofsky said, "and a single arrest hasn't been made since."

Some (In)Famous Sex Stings

Long before George Michael, Larry Craig and Florida State Sen. Bob Allen were caught with their flies open in public men's rooms, there have been many schemes to entice men into attempting to solicit an undercover cop. Here are some of them:

- Five teachers and a high school football coach in Fresno, Cal., lost their jobs in a public restroom sting.
- More than 800 men, including two Canadian heterosexuals who were beaten after they were mistaken as gay lovers, were arrested by San Antonio park rangers over just two years.
- A respected official in a Connecticut town committed suicide after a Providence, R.I., newspaper published his name along with several others nabbed in a video-store raid.
- Another man, in rural Arkansas, also committed suicide after a Little Rock newspaper refused pleas from gay organizations not to publish names of men arrested in a similar raid.
- After a Harrisburg, Penn., newspaper reported a man for "publicly masturbating while other men watched," he lost his wife and his home.
- New Jersey State Police have been arresting men in rest areas and in the woods along the Palisades Parkway, a scenic route that parallels New York City on the western side of the Hudson River. In some cases, the police reportedly don't even bother to wait for the money to enter the public coffers but simply extort cash on the spot in lieu of arrests.

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"It always seemed to me a bit pointless to disapprove of homosexuality. It's like disapproving of rain."
—Francis Maude

California Episcopal Diocese Votes to Secede

An Episcopal diocese in central California voted Dec. 8 to split with the national denomination over disagreements about the role of gay men and lesbians in the church.

Clergy and lay members of the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin voted 173 to 22 at their annual convention to remove all references to the U.S. church from the diocese's constitution, said the Rev. Van McCalister, a diocesan spokesman.

The diocese, in a later vote, accepted an invitation to join the Anglican Church of the Southern Cone, a conservative South American congregation of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The Episcopal Church is the U.S. member of the global Anglican Communion.

The Episcopal Church's presiding bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori, said she was saddened by the action.

"We deeply regret their unwillingness or inability to live within the historical Anglican understanding of comprehensiveness," she said in a statement. "We wish them to know of our prayers for them and their journey. The Episcopal Church will continue in the Diocese of San Joaquin, albeit with new leadership."

The Fresno-based congregation is the first full diocese to secede because of a conservative-liberal rift that began decades ago and is now focused on whether the Bible condemns gay relationships.

"We have leadership in the Episcopal Church that has drastically and radically changed directions," McCalister said. "They have pulled

the rug out from under us. They've started teaching something very different, something very new and novel, and it's impossible for us to follow a leadership that has so drastically reinvented itself.

The decision is almost certain to spark a court fight over control of the diocese's multimillion-dollar real estate holdings and other assets.

The Fresno diocese had explored breaking ties with the U.S. church since 2003, when Episcopalians consecrated the church's first openly gay bishop, V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire. The resulting uproar throughout the world Anglican fellowship has split the 77 million-member communion.

Christian advocates for accepting gay relationships, including Jefferts Schori, say they are guided by biblical teachings on social justice and tolerance. But Bishop John-David Schofield and other conservatives believe Scripture bars same-sex relationships.

San Joaquin is one of three Episcopal dioceses that will not ordain women. Last year the Episcopal Church elected Jefferts Schori as its first woman primate.

About 55 conservative Episcopal parishes have split from the church in the last few years and some have affiliated directly with Anglican provinces overseas, according to national church statistics.

Grenada Relents on Gay Cruises

Cruise ships carrying gay passengers will be permitted to dock in Grenada this winter, the Caribbean island's tourism minister says.

Several hotels received visitor cancellations after the *Toronto Star* reported that the country was questioning whether to allow entry to gay cruise ships, tourism minister Clarice Modeste-Curwen said in a statement Dec. 7.

Some protesters also wrote the Canadian government asking that aid be cut to Grenada's Port of St. Georges where cruise ships dock, she added.

She said, "We will continue to welcome all visitors and we will work, along with our population, to ensure that their time and ours will be enjoyable. Grenada respects the rights of all persons of all persuasions and lifestyles."

Left unmentioned was that homosexual relations remain illegal in Grenada.

The government's position was

reached "following several days of consultations on the matter involving tourism officials and various stakeholders," the minister's statement said.

In Toronto, the head of the Toronto-based gay rights group Egale said she was watching developments closely. "We're hoping the government will change its legislation," said Helen Kennedy, "not only for the sake of cruise passengers but also for the GLBT community in that country."

Rachel Charles, spokesperson for the island's HIV/AIDS advocacy group Human Rights Desk, said the country's laws violate UN human rights conventions signed by Grenada, as does government questioning of whether to allow gay cruises to stop at the island.

GLBT Employees at Nike Sponsor New Flag

The Nike Tennessee Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Friends Network has approved a \$1,000 contribution towards the new Mid-South Pride 100-foot rainbow flag. The donation makes the Nike Tennessee GLBT Network a Grand Sponsor.

Daniel Forrest, co-chair, approached Mid-South Pride in November about a significant donation in memory of the late Gary Wilkerson, founding president of Mid-South Pride. The leadership voted shortly thereafter, and Mid-South Pride should receive the funds in the coming weeks.

The Nike employee network sponsorship, in addition to major spon-

sorships from Tennessee Equality Project and Inz and Outz should provide all the funds necessary for the construction of the new flag. If any other donors wish to be included, those funds will be set aside for maintenance of the new flag and perhaps to help it travel to other Pride events which request it. The flag traveled to Little Rock and St. Louis before its retirement. These sponsors will have

their names placed on a banner carried in front of the flag.

Mike Morgan, of Mr. Hyde Fashions, is working out the logistics of replicating the huge symbol and it is planned to have the flag finished for the Prides of the Southeast Conference to be held in Memphis in February. When the fabric is ready, there will be a Rainbow Sewing Bee to assemble the huge new banner.

Documentary Explores Life and Work of Broadway Composer/Lyricist Jerry Herman

"When they passed out talent," Broadway star Carol Channing says of composer and lyricist Jerry Herman, "Jerry stood in line twice."

Herman wrote the words and music for some of the greatest Broadway musicals ever mounted, including *Hello, Dolly!*, *Mame* and *La Cage aux Folles*. *Words and Music by Jerry Herman*, airs Tues., Jan. 1, 2008, on WKNO.

La Cage aux Folles (1983) was not only a critical and commercial smash, but a political and social turning point. Never before had two men held hands romantically in a musi-

cal or sung a love ballad to one another.

Memphian George Hearn's star turn as Za Za, belting out the dramatic act one closer, "I Am What I Am," still brings audiences to their feet with its forceful call for tolerance and dignity—a surpassingly powerful statement from a composer/lyricist who declared all along that he wanted only to entertain people.

It was, Hearn recalls, in *Words And*

Music, truly "the best of times"—until shortly after the show opened and cast members began dying of a mysterious illness eventually identified as AIDS. Half of the original *La Cage* chorus didn't live to finish the run. Herman himself was diagnosed HIV-positive in 1985; he is one of the fortunate ones who survived to see experimental drug therapies take hold and is still, as one of his lyrics proclaims, "alive and well and thriving."

Showtime on Trail of Gay-Hating Phelps

Until a couple of weeks ago, few people besides members of the GLBT community had heard of the Rev. Fred Phelps and his Topeka, Kan.-based Westboro Baptist Church. Like other fundamentalists, Phelps preaches that gay people are sinful.

But Phelps and his church — nearly all of them his family members — don't stop there.

Phelps believes America is doomed for tolerating homosexuals and that everything bad that happens, from hurricanes to soldier deaths in Iraq, is God's punishment. And he doesn't stop there, either. Church members travel the country picketing the funerals of soldiers killed in Iraq. Just before Thanksgiving Day, a Maryland jury convicted the group of inflicting

emotional distress in such an instance and awarded damages of nearly \$11 million.

Fall From Grace, an extremely restrained and wonderfully comprehensive look at some of the oddest people in the Midwest, began as a film-studies assignment for University of Kansas student K. Ryan Jones. He interviewed Phelps and family members, including a son and daughter who moved far away.

Jones interviewed other ministers and civic leaders and, with no fan-

fare whatsoever, showed how Phelps' comments were nearly identical to those made by former Alabama priest David Trosch, Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell.

At 70 minutes, the documentary is perhaps about 10 minutes too long. After a while, interviews with Phelps and his lawyer son, also a true believer, become a little repetitive. Or maybe it's just that there's only so much any normal viewer can take.

Fall From Grace began showing on Showtime on Dec. 10.

Three sentenced in Death of NYC Gay Man

Three men convicted of beating a gay man and then chasing him onto a highway where he was struck by a car and killed were sentenced to prison in New York, prosecutors said.

All three had been part of what prosecutors called a hate-inspired robbery scheme.

On Oct. 8, 2006, they found Michael Sandy in an Internet chat room frequented by gay men, lured him out to Brooklyn's remote Plum Beach with a promise of a date and then attacked him. When Sandy tried to escape, he was hit by a car on the Belt Parkway.

Anthony Fortunato, 21, who had told jurors they shouldn't convict him of a hate crime because he's

gay was sentenced to seven to 21 years in prison for second-degree manslaughter as a hate crime and attempted petit larceny.

John Fox, 20, was sentenced to seven to 21 years in prison for second-degree manslaughter as a hate crime and attempted robbery as a hate crime.

Ilya Shurov, 21, who pleaded guilty, was sentenced to 17 1/2 years in prison for second-degree manslaughter as a hate crime and attempted robbery as a hate crime.

A fourth man, Gary Timmons, had already pleaded guilty to attempted robbery as a hate crime and testified in the case in exchange for a four-year sentence.

Fortunato claimed in court that the attack was not motivated by hate. But prosecutors argued that under state hate crimes law, they didn't have to prove that Sandy's attackers hated gay men — only that they picked their victim because of his sexual orientation.

Brolin, Hirsch, Franco Got "Milk" Roles

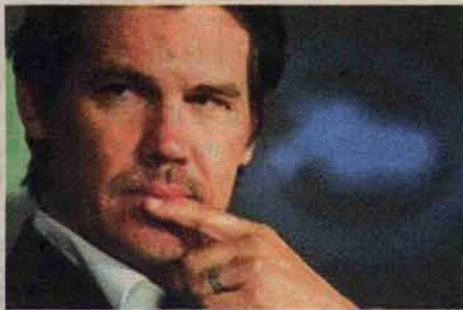
Josh Brolin, Emile Hirsch and James Franco are in final negotiations to join Sean Penn in a movie about Harvey Milk, the country's first openly gay elected official.

Milk, from director Gus Van Sant, stars Penn in the title role as a San Francisco city supervisor who was assassinated in 1978 by a political rival.

Brolin will play the rival, Dan White, who shot both Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone to death at City Hall. Hirsch has been cast as Milk's political ally Cleve Jones, a gay-rights activist who went on to found the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt. Franco will play Scott Smith, Milk's lover and campaign manager.

Principal photography is set to begin in January in San Francisco. Focus Features will distribute worldwide.

Brolin is in theaters with both *No Country for Old Men* and *American Gangster* and Hirsch with the Penn-directed *Into the Wild*. Franco co-starred in *Spider-Man 3* and *In the Valley of Elah*.



Josh Brolin



Emile Hirsch



James Franco

Toyota Threatens Legal Action Over Gay Porn Star Named Lexus

What does Toyota have to do with gay porn? A lot, apparently.

The U.S. branch of the Japanese automaker recently sent a communiqué to Daniel Grangier, president and CEO of Switzerland-based EBOYS Studios, regarding one of his stars, who goes by the screen name Lexus. (Lexus has appeared in such fine films as *CumEater* and *SpunkLand*.)

According to a release sent to JRLChartsOnline.net, the automaker claimed in its letter to Grangier that the name Lexus is a trademark of Toyota Motors Sales USA, Inc., and by using Lexus in connection with adult films, Eboys Studio is in violation of § 43 (c) of the Federal Trademark Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1125(c) and tarnishes Toyota's business reputation.

Toyota is demanding that Eboys Studio (1) immediately and permanently cease all use of the name Lexus in connection with adult films (2) immediately de-list the two DVDs from the company's official website EboysStudio.com and its affiliates (3) immediately remove all DVD packaging displaying the name of Lexus (4) Eboys Studio should ensure these films are no longer advertised and sold by Eboys Studio's customers.

Added M. Eric T. Fingerhut, the Washington, D.C., attorney representing Toyota: If Eboys Studio does not comply, "Toyota may have no choice but to take legal action in order to protect its trademark rights."

Grangier, who says his *SpunkLand* star selected his stage name in reference to the Greek



Lexus

god Lexus and not the Toyota-produced luxury vehicle, told JRLChartsOnline.net, "Our attorney, Marcus Batista, is now in negotiation with Toyota's legal team regarding this issue. In a letter sent to Eric Fingerhut on Nov. 21, we have informed them that Eboys Studio expects to comply with some of Toyota's demands, but we will not ask for a worldwide recall of *SpunkLand* and *CumEaters*."

"If Eboys Studio and Toyota Motors cannot reach an agreement," he added, "Eboys Studio will have no other choice but to go to legal action. We will defend our case and our rights. A judge would have to decide if such [a] trademark can prohibit us [from using] the name of a Greek god in our movies."

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McDonald's Melee

Continued from page 1

to protect him (Brisco), and he scratched me," Bolton said.

As the fight progressed, the manager grabbed a pot of hot french fry grease and threw it at the men. One of the men retaliated, hitting the manager in the head with a wet floor sign severe enough to warrant an ambulance.

Before they drove off, the cross dressers allegedly smashed in the drive-thru window with the tire iron.

The incident also prompted a lesson from equality leaders to remind local media about proper reporting on potential GLBT issues.

"The incident is troubling," said Christopher Sanders, president of the Tennessee Equality Project. "The reporting of it is even more troubling. Much of the reporting that we've moni-

tored has been laced with stereotypes. The stories have been of concern to TEP."

Sanders said it would have been more appropriate to describe the three individuals as "cross dressers" instead of the description "transvestite."

While it seems clear that the incident was not unprovoked, the three involved have been in trouble before.

Danny Mitchell has been arrested for driving violations, soliciting rides and prostitution.

Dacorian Greer has taken a different look when arrested for vandalism, soliciting rides and prostitution near a church or school.

Lynn Gillespie has been arrested for driving offenses, theft of property, prostitution and having a controlled substance.

The three were due back in court Dec. 11. *Gaze* was unable to determine the disposition of the case in time for our deadline.



Dacorian Greer



Lynn Gillespie



Danny Mitchell

Two Grants Go to FFL

Two grants totalling \$9,000 will help fund a financial empowerment program and FFL's Wellness University.

Friends For Life recently received a \$4,000 grant from the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis to develop and implement a Women's Financial Empowerment Program. In this new component to be added to the agency's Wellness University, 25 low-income women living with HIV/AIDS will receive training to help them learn skills to avoid credit card debt, develop a budget and establish a plan of action to assist them in getting out of debt.

Friends For Life also has received a grant in the amount of \$5,000 from Until There's A Cure to support the Wellness University. Until There's A Cure® is a national organization dedicated to eradicat-

ing HIV/AIDS by raising awareness and funds to combat this pandemic.

The goal of Until There's A Cure is to fund prevention education, care services and vaccine development using The Bracelet as the tool. The Bracelet will serve not only as a bridge to unite people to fight HIV/AIDS, but to help people to recognize that anyone—man, woman, or child—can be infected and that everyone should be compassionate, understanding, and responsible.

Visit the Until There's A Cure web site at www.until.org to learn more about the organization, view its public service announcement and order The Bracelet.



Pictured at the Friends For Life booth during the recent Women's Foundation Grants showcase are L to R) Kim Daugherty, director of Clinical Services; Windy Nicholson, Wellness Program manager; Windy's daughter Taylor Nicholson and Dr. Ricci Hellman, Friends for Life executive director.

Culture Club's Boy George Ordered to Stand Trial

A British judge has ruled there is sufficient evidence against openly gay performer Boy George for a trial on charges of falsely imprisoning a 28-year-old man.

The trial against the 47-year-old singer and DJ, whose real name is George O'Dowd, will begin Feb. 25.

The charge stems from an incident last April where a male escort claimed to have been chained to a wall in George's London apartment.

Auden Carlsen, 28, claims to have met the singer on a popular British gay dating site. He said that he agreed to go to George's apartment to pose for photographs for a fee of about \$750 and on the stipulation there would be no sex.

But after he arrived at the apartment, Carlsen claims to have been attacked by George and another man.

"I was convinced I was going to die," he told the tabloid *The Mirror* in April.

"George handcuffed me to a hook by the bed as they held me down."

Carlsen said he managed to get the hook out of the wall and escape in only his underwear. He called police from a local news vendor's stand.

Police have not named the other man and have declined say whether charges against him are pending.

The case is the latest in a recent string of legal problems for the former Culture Club singer.

Last month a process server posing as a fan seeking an autograph got an unsuspecting George to sign a court order for \$75,000 owed to Club GAY USA promoter Kasia



Saleh.

George had been booked to play at the club but canceled after being busted for cocaine in New York in 2005.

A court ruled that by failing to show up at the club he contributed to its failure.

Last year a judge in New York City sentenced George to five days of community service after being convicted of filing a false police report in connection with the cocaine bust.

The singer had called police with a bogus report of a burglary by a male prostitute at his lower Manhattan apartment. When police went to investigate, they found cocaine inside.

He was originally charged with drug offenses, but under an agreement with prosecutors he pleaded guilty to the lesser charges and worked off his sentence picking garbage.



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Pride in the Party Program to Train Future Democratic Leaders

On Dec. 4, National Stonewall Democrats announced the launch of Pride in the Party. This national program will expand the participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Democrats within state and local Democratic parties and will specifically increase the participation of LGBT Democrats at the 2008 Democratic National Convention.

Pride in the Party was created with a strong focus on developing the participation of LGBT communities of color, union members, youth and veterans.

"Many of our brightest elected officials, chapter leaders and party officers began their participation in Democratic politics as delegates to past conventions," said Jon Hoadley, executive director.

"Pride in the Party is designed to develop that type of local leaders who will ultimately shape the national policy of the Democratic Party on LGBT issues. We are seeking the participation of individuals who want to help the Democratic Party grow and win by advancing the values which make it strong."

Rick Boylan, former director of Party Affairs and Delegate Selection at the Democratic National

Committee, will serve as director of Pride in the Party. It was also announced that Rick Stafford, chair of the GLBT Americans Caucus at the Democratic National Committee and former Chair of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, will be utilized by the program as a consultant with a focus on state parties.

Assisting in outreach to the LGBT communities, particularly within the Party's core constituencies are consultants Mandy Carter, former member of the Democratic National Committee and the DNC's GLBT and Black Caucuses, and Laura M. Esquivel, a strategist with experience in successfully building bridges between Latino/a and LGBT constituencies.

The program will work with presidential campaigns, state par-

ties and allied organizations to ensure that LGBT Democrats are reflected in each state delegation. Pride in the Party will assist in training and advising interested individuals and in the development of delegate campaigns.

What Community Leaders are Saying About Pride in the Party

"Pride in the Party is a hands-on opportunity to educate policy-makers, regardless of their political affiliation, on the priorities of our community. This program enables advocates to actively inform the political process on issues of gender identity and expression." — *Mara Keisling, Executive Director, National Center for Transgender Equality*

"The more openly LGBT people serving in powerful party positions, the more likely we are

to see inclusive party platforms and inclusive campaigns. National Stonewall Democrats is doing our community a great service in prioritizing this program."

— *Dave Noble, Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs, The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force*

"The upcoming elections will set the tone for progressive movement for decades to come. It is paramount that LGBT people play a positive and visible role. Stonewall is leading the way." — *H. Alexander Robinson, Executive Director, National Black Justice Coalition*

"For LGBT workers, political action is a vital element of any strategy to win protection from job discrimination, as well as to gain improved wages, better working conditions and increased job security.

In 30 of the 50 states, it remains legal to discriminate against gay, lesbian and bisexual workers; in 39 states, it is legal to discriminate against transgender workers. Registering to vote and participating in the political process are essential steps for LGBT workers to break down these barriers to full inclusion in the American Dream." — *Donna Cartwright, Communications Director, Pride at Work, AFL-CIO*

National Stonewall Democrats has launched www.PrideInTheParty.org as a stand-alone website where LGBT Democrats can sign up to participate in the delegate selection process and access state-by-state information.

Overall program goals include:

- At a minimum, the election of 321 LGBT delegates, a 14 percent increase in the number of LGBT Democrats elected to the 2008 Democratic National Convention over 2004 numbers (282 LGBT Democrats were elected as delegates in 2004).

- The participation of LGBT Democrats in the delegations of all 50 states (42 states sent LGBT delegates in 2004).

- Increase in the participation of LGBT Democrats of color.

- Increase in the participation of LGBT youth, veterans and union members. Most delegates to the 2008 Democratic National

Convention will be elected by Democratic voters within their congressional district and approved by the presidential campaigns which they seek to represent.

Often complex, the procedures for becoming a delegate vary greatly from state to state. Pride in the Party is an organized effort to help LGBT Democrats navigate their state's particular requirements and to run successful campaigns to win delegate positions.

Prior to the launch of Pride in the Party, National Stonewall Democrats undertook efforts to require each state Democratic Party to work toward the increased participation of LGBT Democrats within their 2008 delegations. As a result, the Rules and Bylaws of the Democratic National Committee were amended to require each state party to establish numerical goals for LGBT participation at the 2008 Democratic National Convention or implement comprehensive participation and outreach programs.

Already, 47 states have established numerical goals for the participation of LGBT Democrats in 2008. Alaska, Arkansas and Mississippi have established inclusion programs but not numerical goals.

The Democratic National Convention will be held Aug. 25 through Aug. 28 in Denver, Col. It immediately follows the Stonewall Democrats National Convention, also held in Denver Aug. 21-24.

National Stonewall Democrats is the only national organization of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Democrats, with more than 90 local chapters across the nation including one in Memphis. NSD is committed to working through the Democratic Party to advance the rights of all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Memphis Stonewall Democrats: <http://www.memphisstonewalldemocrats.org>

See Tennessee State Delegation Plan: <http://www.prideintheparty.org/pdf/TN.pdf>



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"If homosexuality is a disease, then let's all call in queer to work: 'Hello. Can't work today, still queer.'"

— Robin Tyler

California Episcopal Diocese Votes to Secede

An Episcopal diocese in central California voted Dec. 8 to split with the national denomination over disagreements about the role of gay men and lesbians in the church.

Clergy and lay members of the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin voted 173 to 22 at their annual convention to remove all references to the U.S. church from the diocese's constitution, said the Rev. Van McCalister, a diocesan spokesman.

The diocese, in a later vote, accepted an invitation to join the Anglican Church of the Southern Cone, a conservative South American congregation of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The Episcopal Church is the U.S. member of the global Anglican Communion.

The Episcopal Church's presiding bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori, said she was saddened by the action.

"We deeply regret their unwillingness or inability to live within the historical Anglican understanding of comprehensiveness," she said in a statement. "We wish them to know of our prayers for them and their journey. The Episcopal Church will continue in the Diocese of San Joaquin, albeit with new leadership."

The Fresno-based congregation is the first full diocese to secede because of a conservative-liberal rift that began decades ago and is now focused on whether the Bible condemns gay relationships.

"We have leadership in the Episcopal Church that has drastically and radically changed directions," McCalister said. "They have pulled the rug out from under us. They've started teaching something very different, something very new and novel, and it's impossible for us to follow a leadership that has so drastically reinvented itself."

The decision is almost certain to spark a court fight over con-

trol of the diocese's multimillion-dollar real estate holdings and other assets.

The Fresno diocese had explored breaking ties with the U.S. church since 2003, when Episcopalians consecrated the church's first openly gay bishop, V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire. The resulting uproar throughout the world Anglican fellowship

has split the 77 million-member communion.

Christian advocates for accepting gay relationships, including Jefferts Schori,

say they are guided by biblical teachings on social justice and tolerance. But Bishop John-David Schofield and other conservatives believe Scripture bars same-sex relationships.

San Joaquin is one of three Episcopal dioceses that will not ordain women. Last year the Episcopal Church elected Jefferts Schori as its first woman primate.

About 55 conservative Episcopal parishes have split from the church in the last few years and some have affiliated directly with Anglican provinces overseas, according to national church statistics.

Kirk Pamper, Noted Floral Designer Dead at 50

Kirk Pamper, 50, former owner of Botanica floral shop died Nov. 19 after a long bout with cancer.

Pamper was not only well known for his exotic designs, he was known also for his general knowledge of horticulture and his ability to share his knowledge with co-workers and afficianados.

Pamper's particular interest in a plant called mother-in-law's tongue (*Sansevieria trifasciata*) eventually led him to collect over 200 varieties of the plant from across the world.

"When he was a teen, he was given his first *Sansevieria* plant, I want to say from our grandmother. I guess that just got him interested in knowing more about that plant," said his sister, Kristyn Gresham in

an interview with Jody Callahan for *The Commercial Appeal*. "Before long, he was going on collecting expeditions to Ecuador and Africa."

In 2005, Pamper was presented with the Award of Distinguished Service to the Floral Industry, and in 2006 was honored with the Tommy Bright Award for lifetime achievement in floral presentation.

Pamper supported the Memphis gay community in many ways. He offered floral arrangements for many awards ceremonies and charity auctions as well as being one of the first floral shops to



Kirk Pamper

advertise in local gay newspapers. He served as one of four volunteer coordinators for the first production of *Heart Strings* staged in 1989.

Pamper's collections of rare plants are expected to be housed at the Memphis Botanical Garden where friends plan to stage a memorial service in the spring.

Bob Kohler, Gay Rights Pioneer, 1926-2007

Bob Kohler, gay activist, former owner of The Loft on Christopher Street, Stonewall veteran, co-founder of the Gay Liberation Front, ACT UP member, and longtime fixture of Charles Street, died on Dec. 6 at the age of 81. The cause of death was cancer, according to friends.

Kohler was remembered as a tireless fighter for gay rights, transsexual rights, queer youth and people with HIV/AIDS who never gave up the struggle even as he battled illness and advancing years.

To his younger friends, Kohler recounted stories of a queer world in another era: how he and his boyfriend Ed bought a fixer-upper in Amagansett in what became a gay enclave; of the show-biz lesbians who settled in nearby Bridgehampton; about the eventual move to Cherry Grove and the Pines on Fire Island and the class wars that defined relations between the two gay settlements.

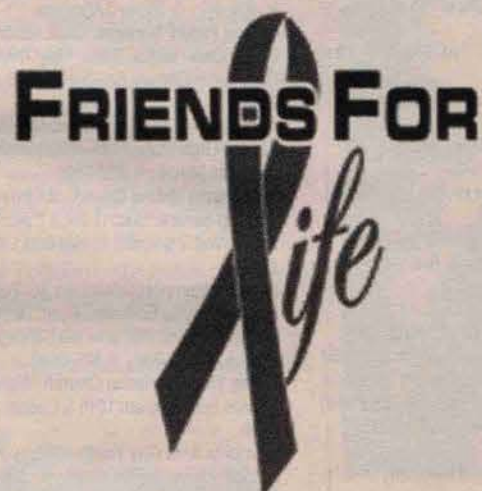
On the second night of the Stonewall riots in 1969, Kohler and other West Village community members called the first meeting of the Gay Liberation Front, which Kohler (and historians) credit with "establishing radicalism in the New York gay community." He went on to work with direct action and advocacy groups including ACT UP, Sex Panic!, The Neutral Zone, Fed Up Queers, the NYC AIDS Housing Network, Irish Queers, animal rights groups, and others. Throughout his work, Kohler was a father figure to activists and street kids, including Sylvia Rivera, who herself grew up to be a parent and mentor to queer youth.



Bob Kohler

In the late 1970s, Kohler became manager of the Club Baths. He fought the closure of bathhouses as a response to AIDS in the 1980s, arguing that they were controlled environments with condoms, soap and water, and information "and that many bathhouses were willing to take on a community organizing role to stop the spread of HIV."

Most recently, Kohler has mentored the queer youth of FIERCE! in struggles against displacement, police harassment and attacks by residents of the increasingly heterosexual West Village."



Thank You!

Friends For Life expresses heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made this year's APATT a huge success. To all the many volunteers who planned the event, everyone who hosted parties, attended parties as well as the finale costume party and made generous donations... FFL and the 2,000 persons affected by HIV/AIDS we serve say...

Thank You!

www.friendsforlifecorp.org



Queer Notes

Political Commentary
by Jim Maynard

Congress dropped the Matthew Shepard hate crime bill from a defense appropriation bill because there were not enough votes to pass it.

The legislation, which passed the House and the Senate, was attached to the defense bill by the Senate to make it more difficult for Bush to veto it. However, many liberal Democrats in the House did not want to have to vote to support more funding for the Iraq occupation to support the hate crime bill, so the Democratic leadership, including Rep. Barney Frank, decided to drop the hate crime legislation from the defense appropriation bill.

Once again the Democratic Congress has caved in to Bush and the Republicans. Not only did the Democrats drop the hate crimes bill from the defense appropriation, they also dropped any timetable for troop withdrawal from Iraq, gave \$50 billion more for the illegal occupation, and cut more domestic spending. Bush still says he will veto the bill because it has too much domestic spending and not enough military spending!

I know the Democrats have a slim majority in the Senate and cannot override a GOP filibuster or a presidential veto. But, instead of caving in to Bush and the GOP, why don't the Democrats make the GOP filibuster and Bush veto bills, and let *them* take the heat for blocking more funding for the troops?

Sometimes it seems like the Democratic Party is just tempting me to join the Green Party or the Socialist Party, until I look at those neo-fascist Republicans! In the last Republican debate, it looked like a contest to see which candidate could be the most Christo-fascist. The candidates were asked important questions, like do they believe every word in the Bible? Only Giuliani and Romney had a hard time answering affirmatively.

Retired Brigadier General Keith Kerr asked the Republican candidates why they thought American women and men in uniform are not professional enough to serve with gays and lesbians. All of the GOP candidates affirmed their support of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" military policy with the same worn excuses. The Republican audience showed their lack of respect for General Kerr by booing him! Conservative talking heads dismissed Kerr as a "phony soldier" (like they

do all veterans opposed to Bush's illegal war) because he is part of Hillary Clinton's LGBT steering committee.

Meanwhile, on the 14th anniversary of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" military policy, 28 retired generals and admirals sent a letter to Congress urging that they scrap the failed policy. In response to the Human Rights Campaign, all of the Democratic candidates have issued statements on what they would do to end the anti-gay DADT policy.

Gay Republicans continue to blame Bill Clinton for DADT, even though Republicans fought against Clinton's attempt to lift the ban on gays in the military. Remember, back in 1992, most Americans still supported the ban on gays in the military, and the existing military policy prohibited gays from serving at all. Clinton was forced to compromise with conservatives to allow gays to serve as long as they were not public about being gay. At the time, DADT was a step forward. While all of the Republican candidates still support DADT, all of the Democratic candidates are now opposed to it. See the difference?

By the way, according to a *Los Angeles Times*/Bloomberg poll, 6 out of 10 military families disapprove of President Bush's job performance and 60 percent of those families with sailors and marines in Iraq or Afghanistan say that the invasion and occupation of Iraq was not worth the cost. So much for "supporting the troops"!

Apparently the Log Cabin Republicans have decided not to endorse the most "pro-gay" GOP candidate, Rudy Giuliani, but they are attacking Mitt Romney in ads on "Mitt-flops," accusing him of raising taxes as governor of Massachusetts. They could also point out that "Multipe-Mitt" also flip-flopped on gay rights.

When he ran for the U.S. Senate in 1994 against Edward Kennedy, Romney sent a letter to the Log Cabin Republicans asking for their support. He wrote, "I am more convinced than ever before that as we seek to establish full equality for America's gay and lesbian citizens, I will provide more effective leadership than my opponent." He also wrote that he thought Clinton's DADT policy was a "step in the right direction" and that it was "the first of a number of steps that will ultimately lead to gays and lesbians being able to serve openly and honestly in our nation's military. That goal will only be reached when preventing discrimination

against gays and lesbians is a mainstream concern, which is a goal we share."

The new Mitt Romney is now claiming to be the most anti-gay Republican candidate for president! He supports a constitutional amendment to prohibit equal marriage rights for gays and lesbians. Like the other GOP candidates he opposes equal rights for gays in the military and opposes the Employment Non-Discrimination Act to prohibit discrimination against gays and lesbians in employment.

Despite all of this, Romney still has a problem with the Christian Right—he is a Mormon, which most conservative Christians consider an anti-Christian cult. Hoping to imitate JFK, Romney gave a speech on religion to try to address those concerns and promised that he would not govern as a Mormon or answer to the Mormon Church as president. However, in an olive branch to the Christian Right, he scolded liberal secularists who insist, as Thomas Jefferson did, on a strict "wall of separation" between church and state. Pandering to the Christian Reich, Romney argued that freedom requires religion!

Going further, Romney called for more tolerance of Judeo-Christian religious beliefs and intolerance of non-believers and secularists! So we should accept Mormons, but not atheists?

Rudy Giuliani's campaign has been hit with several scandals. In addition to his close business ties to convicted or indicted crooks, like his former police commissioner Bernard Kerick, apparently Giuliani used the NYPD and public funds to shuttle around with his mistress. There are lots of skeletons in Giuliani's closet and Republicans are getting nervous about their front-runner.

While Giuliani's campaign has been sinking, former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, a Baptist minister, has surged in recent national polls and is now second nationally and is running 20 points ahead of Romney in Iowa! Talk about a nut case! Back in 1992 when he ran for Senate, Huckabee called for a quarantine of people with AIDS, opposed increasing federal funding for AIDS, did not think AIDS should be treated like a civil rights issue, and argued that

homosexuality could "pose a dangerous public health risk." He blames abortion for illegal immigration, supports a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion, and believes that God wants him to be president.

Now Mike Huckabee has a scandal to deal with. As governor of Arkansas, he pushed for the release of a convicted rapist, Wayne Dumond, who went on to rape and murder at least one other woman. Huckabee has lied about his role in getting Dumond released. Confidential files obtained by the *Huffington Post* demonstrate that Huckabee was very involved in pushing for Dumond's release and commuting his sentence, and show that Huckabee was part of an anti-Clinton campaign led by conservative preachers who believed that Dumond was wrongly sentenced for raping Clinton's cousin.

Huckabee went along with this conspiracy theory and thought that Dumond may have been wrongly accused. He also claims he had no reason to believe Dumond would commit more rapes, even though other rape victims wrote to Huckabee detailing how Dumond

See *Queer Notes* on p. 13

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, Phone: 272-8801.
Lorenz/AfterShock: 1528 Madison, ☎ 274-8272.
Mary's: 405 N. Cleveland, ☎ 725-7334, www.marysmemphis.com.
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 · 5- 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 Etherton, 342-4630 · James Bailey.

Tsaros: 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.

Court: Gay Couple Can't Divorce in Rhode Island

A lesbian couple that married in Massachusetts cannot get divorced in their home state of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Supreme Court ruled Nov. 7.

The court, in a 3-2 decision, said the state's family court lacks the authority to grant the divorce of a same-sex couple because Rhode Island lawmakers have not defined marriage as anything other than a union between a man and a woman.

"The role of the judicial branch is not to make policy, but simply to determine the legislative intent," the court wrote.

Cassandra Ormiston and Margaret Chambers wed in Massachusetts in 2004 and filed for divorce last year in Rhode Island, where they both live. But opponents of same-sex marriage said the court correctly avoided taking a step toward recognizing such unions.

Massachusetts, the only state where gay marriage is legal, restricts the unions to residents of states where the marriage would be recognized, and a Massachusetts judge decided last year that Rhode Island is one of those states.

No law specifically bans same-sex marriages in Rhode Island, but the state has taken no action to recognize them. The justices said Rhode Island laws contain numerous references to marriage as between a woman and a man.

"My civil rights, my human rights have been denied," Ormiston said in a phone interview after the ruling. "It's no small matter."

Nancy Palmisciano, Ormiston's lawyer, said couples married in other states and other countries are routinely granted divorces in Rhode Island, and the same freedom should apply to this couple.

Now Ormiston is stuck in a marriage she doesn't want to be in, Palmisciano said. The women's lawyers have said at least one would have to move to Massachusetts to get a divorce, but Palmisciano said that was not a viable option for her client.

"I'm disappointed for anyone who's involved in one of these marriages who's a resident of the state of Rhode Island," she said. "I think these people are being confined to a legal limbo."

Louis Pulner, a lawyer for Chambers, said he was surprised by the decision.

"I feel that it's unfortunate that two people who are legally married can not get closure here in the state of Rhode Island," Pulner said.

Lawyers for the women had argued that the court should consider only whether Rhode Island could recognize a valid marriage from another state for the sole purpose of granting a divorce petition.

Opponents of same-sex marriage praised Rhode Island's top court for rejecting even a limited recognition of same-sex marriage.

"The meaning of marriage in Rhode Island is the union of a man and a woman," said Monte Stewart, president of the Marriage Law Foundation, which filed a brief in the case. "You have to have a marriage before you can have a divorce."

Karen Loewy, a staff attorney for Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, said she viewed the court's decision as a narrow ruling, but feared that same-sex marriage opponents would use it to argue against broader legal recognition for same-sex couples in Rhode Island.

"You're essentially asking these women to move to access justice," Loewy said. "The door of the courthouse has been barred for them."

The couple's divorce petition drew a broad range of supporters, including Attorney General Patrick Lynch, who earlier this year released a nonbinding advisory opinion saying Rhode Island should recognize same-sex marriages performed in Massachusetts.

In earlier court filings, Gov. Don Carcieri, an opponent of same-sex marriage, had also argued in favor of granting the divorce. He said under Rhode Island law, the Family Court didn't have to address whether the marriage was valid at all, avoiding a larger debate about same-sex unions.

But he hailed the Dec. 7 court decision, saying in a written statement that, "It has always been clear to me that Rhode Island law was designed to permit marriage — and therefore divorce — only between a man and a woman."

Gay Rights Groups React to Congress' Decision to Drop Hate Crimes Bill

Congressional aides are reporting that a House-Senate conference committee has dropped the hate-crimes legislation co-sponsored by Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., and Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., from a defense authorization bill because it did not have sufficient support in the House.

The legislation, formally known as the "Matthew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act" (S. 1105), would have expanded federal law to include crimes committed against people because of their gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Gay rights groups and supporters reacted strongly to the decision, with Wade Henderson, president of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, telling the Associated Press that the legislation is "the last clear chance this year for Congress to make a meaningful effort to stop hate crime violence."

Added Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese: "Today's

decision is deeply disappointing, especially given the historic passage of hate crimes legislation through both Houses of Congress this year. After more than ten years and several successful bipartisan votes, it is heartbreaking to fall short this close to the finish line. However, we are not giving up on efforts to find another legislative vehicle, in the second half of this Congress, to move the Matthew Shepard Act."

Matthew Shepard's parents, Judy and Dennis, released a statement on Dec. 6 in which they said, "We are truly dismayed to find that Congress now will put aside its leadership on passage of federal hate crimes legis-

lation that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.

"At this time of year that fills us all with hope for humankind, we are sad to find that a Congressional majority of each House who have already adopted the Matthew Shepard Act cannot yet come together," they added. "If not here, where? If not now, when?"

The Shepards said they are "dedicated to redoubling our efforts next year to achieve our vision of a hate-free America that truly includes everyone. This has never simply been about Matthew Shepard and our family, this legislation is a gift delayed but never forgotten for all America's families."

Queer Notes

Continued from page 12

raped them and emphasized the danger he posed to others. Huckabee has claimed that he did not pressure the parole board to release Dumond, but four parole board members claim he personally lobbied them to free Dumond. It looks like Huckabee is a liar.

Senate Minority Whip, the disgraced former GOP Senate Majority Leader (and homophobic racist) Trent Lott (R-MS), announced he is resigning from Congress just in time to avoid new ethics rules prohibiting him from working as a lobbyist after he leaves office. Or, could it be because he has a relationship with a gay male escort? According to one blogger, BigHead DC, Lott was a client of gay male escort Benjamin Nicholas. Nicholas denies it, and has chastised other male escorts, like Mike Jones, for disclosing their business with men like Ted Haggard. Most likely, Lott resigned for a lucrative lobbying job, or because his brother-in-law and nephew have been indicted for bribery.

Good Lord, give me Hillary! Hillary Clinton is not my favorite Democratic candidate, but at least she is sane! According to a Hunter College poll, 63 percent of gay and lesbian voters support Hillary Clinton, while 27 percent support Obama and 7 percent go with Edwards. While HRC leads most polls among Democrats, she may be the easiest candidate for the Republicans to beat in the 2008 election.

A recent Zogby poll shows Clinton losing to all the major GOP candidates, while Obama beats them. Other polls show Clinton winning, but by narrow margins. So LGBT voters, and Democrats, have to choose between the candidate who is the most progressive (Kucinich) or one who can beat the Republicans in 2008. It will not be an easy choice, but at least we don't have to choose between Huckabee, Giuliani and Romney! (The Tennessee presidential primary is Feb. 5, so let's think on this.)

More Bush lies! Bush and Cheney have been using the same lies and fear tactics they used to get us into the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq to do the same to Iran. They have warned that Iran is developing nuclear weapons and if

we don't attack them now we will have "World War III"! But, according to a new National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), they have been lying. The report, a consensus of all intelligence agencies, says Iran abandoned its nuclear weapons program in 2003. It doesn't have a nuclear weapons program. Bush claims he didn't know about this report until a few days prior to its release, but Cheney has been trying to block the report for longer than a year. Once again, the Bush administration has been trying to manipulate intelligence information to start an illegal war! When will Congress impeach these criminals?

(For more Queer Notes, visit queernotes.blogspot.com and share your opinion.)

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"I like my beers cold and my homosexuals flaming."

— Homer Simpson

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.

Support for Advancing Equality Day Urged

Thanksgiving is a time to count the many blessings in our lives. As Americans we are fortunate to live in a country that values individual liberty and equality under the law. However, there's a battle brewing on the horizon that challenges the very freedoms that we hold dear.

First, there is good news. Recently, the Tennessee state attorney general issued an opinion that "there is no prohibition in Tennessee adoption statutes against adoption by a same-sex couple."

Now the bad news. In response to the attorney general's opinion, David Fowler, president of the Family Action Council of Tennessee (<http://www.factn.org>), stated the following in his newsletter:

"Without legislative action, Tennessee will see unmarried heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals, transvestites and other cohabitating couples seeking to adopt where the child does not have the benefit of a stable home environment and the protection of the law."

I'm writing to make you aware that this legislative threat is looming in the upcoming Tennessee General Assembly (beginning January 2008). Tennessee's anti-gay industry was emboldened by the passage of the 2006 marriage amendment in Tennessee. Now, they are out to strip us of the right to adopt! As someone with a background in child welfare, I know that such legislation would limit options for children who deserve a loving home.

I urge you to get involved in this upcoming struggle. Tennessee Equality Project (TEP) will host Advancing Equality Day in Nashville on Feb. 19, 2008 (the day after President's Day) – an opportunity for all progressive citizens to tell their legislators that this hateful kind of legislation has no place in the law books of Tennessee. See http://eqfed.org/tnep/notice-description.tcl?newsletter_id=16936745.

The Shelby County Committee of TEP and other organizations are planning to offer Lobbying 101 training in Memphis on Jan. 26, 2008 to help prepare our voices for Advancing Equality Day. If you know you cannot be in Nashville in February, consider making a contribution to TEP to help ensure that a progressive voice is heard by General Assembly (<http://tnep.org/html/donate.html>).

Please mark these dates on your calendar **today** and let your employer know that you won't be at work on Feb. 19. More details on these events are on the way.

Peace be with you.

Jonathan Cole
Memphis

Male Prostitution Sting at Overton Park

Eric Martin and Eddie McGhee were busted in a prostitution sting in Overton Park.

Memphis Police arrested several men on prostitution and indecent exposure charges at Overton Park, Thurs., Nov. 29.

Investigators say they received several complaints from citizens about male prostitutes in the park. They say the complaints ranged from sexual favors being solicited to public indecency.

Investigators say plainclothes detectives staked out the area and arrested eight men during a two-day sting, which began earlier that week.

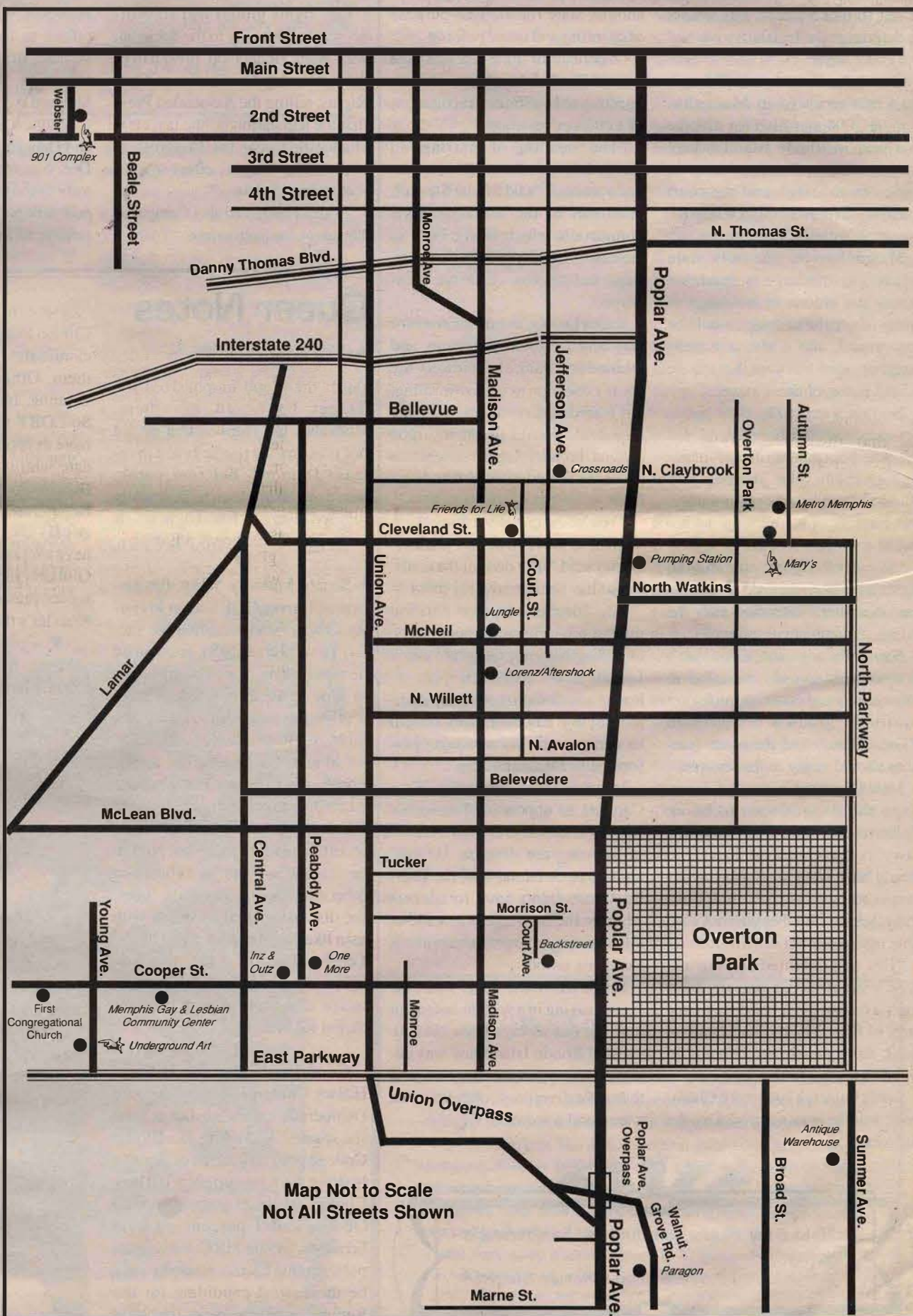
Eric Martin, 39, was charged with prostitution and indecent exposure and Eddie McGhee, 38, was charged with prostitution.

Police say five other men were issued misdemeanor citations for indecent exposure.

"Stings" like this one are a relatively common occurrence in Overton Park although they are usually seen in election years, according to many observers in the gay community.

Park-goers have complained for years about the northeast corner of the park where hustlers gather and sit on the hoods of their parked cars. That area of the park is a heavily wooded "old forest" area which offered cover for sexual trysts. Several years ago the Park Commission closed a park entrance at that corner and severely limited vehicular traffic through that part of the park.

(See related article on page 6.)



Idle Thoughts and Random Musings

By Allen Cook

Apparently the love and good will engendered by the Thanksgiving holiday had absolutely no effect on the three transvestites who attacked workers at a local MacDonald's over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

On the surface, the story sparks a smile... not unlike the scene in *To Wong Foo...* where Wesley Snipes grabs a local hooligan by the balls and teaches him some manners. In fact, the whole scenario smacks of *To Wong Foo...* gone horribly wrong: Three drag queens hit the road and chaos ensues. "Don't make me come in there, girl."

At this point we don't know what triggered the attack (bad service at the drive-through, a bad attitude on the part of the cashier or faux PMS on the part of the attackers), but we do know that all three had run-ins with the law before. Two of them had been arrested for prostitution and approaching cars. What would Julie Newmar say?

During the week after this story happened, a reader e-mailed me encouraging a story on it suggesting that the three might be transgender and they had been

treated badly. While no one seems to be talking much about what actually triggered the attack, I have no doubt some harsh words were exchanged before the tire iron and wet floor sign flew.

Thanks to Jim Easter for pointing out that we left Crossroads, one of Memphis' most popular bars, off our map for *Gaze*'s first two months of publication. Rest assured, the mistakes we make are never intentional. By way of explanation, I can only say that it's far more difficult to see what's missing than see a mistake in something already there. Readers, please be sure to alert us to any sins of omission like these. We actually do appreciate it. It shows us you are paying attention. You can send comments through our website gazememphis.com.

You gotta love a producer/writer like David E. Kelly (*Picket Fences*, *Boston Public*, *The Practice* and currently *Boston Legal*) for consistently tackling the issues of the day with both humor and thought provoking dialogue.

On a recent episode of *Boston Legal*, lawyer Dennie Crain (Will-

iam Shatner) was struck with a case of constipation. In an effort to relieve the problem, he partook of a public restroom. He checked under the stalls for a vacant one, entered it, put down his briefcase and in his efforts to relieve himself "gave (him)self a wide berth," began humming (to relax himself) and started tapping his foot ("to give myself a rhythm to hum to") and was promptly arrested for solicitation of prostitution.

What ensued was one of the funniest hours of television I've seen in quite a while. Try to catch that one in reruns. The episode was entitled "Oral Contracts."

I probably should have done this last month around Thanksgiving, but I'll do it now.

I want to publicly thank all of the people who have come up to me over the past few months and expressed their gratitude for bringing *Gaze* back to life. I would also like to thank those individuals who encouraged me to do it, namely Darren and Ron at Inz and Outz, the late Gary Wilkerson of Mid-South Pride, Bill and Larry at Antique Warehouse Mall and, of course, my new business partner in this endeavor, Bob Dumais.

It may be that the day of the specific niche (in this case, gay) newspaper has passed—a victim of the information glut available on the internet. We won't really know that for a while.

As for me, after a year and half of *not* doing a monthly gay newspaper, I find myself even more committed to keeping one alive in Memphis.

Gaze

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

16	17 • Feast For Friends, 6:30, St. John's Methodist Church	18	19 • Womyn's Potluck, 6:00, MGLCC	20	21 • Q-Cafe: {iano Sing- Along, 7:00, MGLCC,	22
23	24 • Perpetual Transition, 7:30, MGLCC	25 CHRISTMAS • Holiday Brunch, Noon, MGLCC 	26	27	28	29
30	31 • New Year's Eve Celebration, 7:00, MGLCC	1 NEW YEARS DAY	2 • Men's Potluck, 6:00, MGLCC	3	4 • Q-Cafe, 7, MGLCC • Gaze Ad Reservation Deadline for Mid- January edition	5
6 • MGLCC Board Meeting, 1:00, MGLCC	7 • Feast For Friends, 6:30, St. John's Methodist Church • Perpetual Transition, 7:30, MGLCC	8 • Mid-January Gaze Production Deadline	9	10	11 • Q-Cafe, 7, MGLCC • Mid-January Gaze due out	12

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