

Mid-January
2008

Gaze

An Independent Newspaper for the Memphis GLBT Community

FREE

Memphis Stonewall Dems to Hold Presidential Forum

The Memphis Stonewall Democrats will hold a public forum at the Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center on Sun., Jan. 27.

The forum is scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. and is designed to debate which Democratic presidential candidate to support in the Feb. 5 Tennessee primary.

Individuals are encouraged to come and defend their candidate choice. A straw poll will be taken to see which candidate has the most support among those attending.

National Stonewall Democrats have launched their "Pride in the Party" initiative to get more LGBT people involved in the Democratic Party and help them become delegates to the Democratic National Convention.

Members are also asked to renew their membership for 2008, and those who have not joined are encouraged to do so to help support LGBT civil rights in the Democratic Party. Membership dues are

\$20 and can be mailed to: Memphis Stonewall Democrats, P.O. Box 42041, Memphis, TN 38174 or delivered at the meeting. Monthly meetings are the Fourth Sundays of the month, 2 p.m. at the Memphis Gay & Lesbian Community Center (892 S. Cooper).

For more information contact mphsstonewalldem@yahoo.com or visit www.memphisstonewalldemocrats.org

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

TEP Offers 'Lobbying 101' in Anticipation of Advancing Equality Day

The Tennessee Equality Project (TEP) is not taking chances when the General Assembly reconvenes in January. The Tennessee anti-gay industry has already announced that they plan to have legislation introduced that would restrict our adoption rights and leave even more children waiting for a loving home.

TEP's "Lobbying 101" training sessions offered throughout the state will prepare fair-minded citizens to fight back. Learning how to speak about equality issues with your legislators is not difficult. When lawmakers can put a face with an issue, it changes their minds. A commitment to tell those in power why equality matters to you can help stop bad bills. Even if adoption isn't the most important issue to you, by getting to know your senator and representative, you will help facilitate fair legislation for GLBT citizens.

TEP will offer "Lobbying 101" in Memphis on Sat., Jan. 26, from 1-3 p.m. at the Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center (892 S. Cooper). MGLCC's Initiative: Fairness will host this event, and Nike TN GLBT and Friends Network will provide refreshments.

Rep. Mike Kernell (D-93) of Memphis has accepted an invitation to speak. Other General Assembly members from Shelby County may also attend. Dr. Marisa Richmond from Nashville will facilitate the training. If expected participation exceeds the capacity of the community center, an alternative training site will be announced. If inclement weather occurs in Memphis on Jan. 26, the training will be held on Sun., Jan. 27.

"Lobbying 101" training will prepare you for TEP's Fourth Annual Advancing Equality Day on the Hill in Nashville on Tues., Feb. 19.

TEP tracks all legislation in the General Assembly that affects GLBT citizens in Tennessee and develops talking points you can share with your elected representatives.

See **Lobbying 101** on page 3



The Blue Suede Bears collected more than 600 toys during the pre-holiday season and donated them to Friends For Life to distribute to children living with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

QBliss Names Leadership Award for Wilkerson

On June 9, 2007, QBliss Executive Director, Founder, and Editor In Chief Russell Olivera Jr., met an extraordinary man named Gary Wilkerson. The two met at Mid-South Pride's "Pride Festival" in Memphis and this was the first face-to-face meeting after months of corresponding through e-mails and phone calls since QBliss was the media sponsor for the event.

Olivera had heard whispers of what was happening in Memphis — that it's annual pride event was something special and unlike many other pride events. The event was produced by Mid-South Pride, which were changing the face of pride and bringing a community together in a way that was all inclusive, positive, and breaking stereotypes, creating a different vision of what a pride event is all about. Olivera knew he had to make QBliss a part of this event and its message, so QBliss became the event's media sponsor.

Olivera interviewed Gary Wilkerson in person at the event and found a man who had a similar vision on where the greater GLBTI community could go, and how our community could change. The positive optimism Wilkerson showed during the interview connected with Olivera's already positive and optimistic vision for our community.

Olivera has found over the years this optimism and vision of building a better, positive, all-inclusive and stronger community is becoming more and more harder to find in

leaders of our community. Olivera left that day feeling extremely hopeful and that Memphis was in good hands.

In 2004, Gary Wilkerson co-founded Mid-South Pride, Inc. He also became a much needed community leader and activist, Gary helped make Mid-South Pride a successful and more importantly view changing group. A group that truly shows what pride is all about.

In October 2007, Olivera and the greater GLBTI community, local and worldwide, learned that Gary Wilkerson had passed away at 45 years old. Olivera was heartbroken that a fellow gay brother and leader with vision, hope and a love for a community struggling to find the leaders of tomorrow, was gone.

In January 2008, Olivera announced that QBliss would pay tribute to Wilkerson by naming a community award after him: The QBliss GLBTIA Creating Change Community Award — "Gary Wilkerson Visionary Leadership



The late Gary Wilkerson at the 2007 Gay Pride

Award."

Olivera said. "the award would be given to the leaders of our greater GLBTI community and our allies, whose vision and work reflects the importance of inclusion, tolerance and showing that a community is made of many people, and that each is a vital member."

Is FDA Risking Gay Men's Lives?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced in December that it is adopting a new rule that would require warning labels on contraceptive products that contain the spermicide nonoxynol-9 (N-9), but the federal agency is delaying the establishment of a similar rule on condoms containing N-9.

The Deputy Director for the Global Campaign for Microbicides, Anna Forbes, said it appeared to her that the FDA was "stalling" on the implementation of the N-9 rules.

Microbicides refer to a wide range of topically applied products including gels, creams and suppositories that prevent the transmission of AIDS and other STDs. The Global Campaign is a nonprofit organization that works with a network of over 285 non-governmental organizations to help accelerate the development of microbicides. It has called for the removal of N-9 from all condoms.

The FDA is considering labeling requirements for N-9 condoms separately from other N-9 contraceptive products because it classifies condoms as "medical devices." The two major manufacturers of N-9 condoms, Church and Dwight, the makers of the Trojan brand, and Ansell, the maker of the LifeStyles brand, wrote to the FDA suggesting that warning consumers about N-9 condoms could be confusing and could stop some consumers from using condoms at all. That objection was the major factor in causing the FDA to delay N-9 labeling rules.

Citing that reason, the FDA opted to study the issue further. The first phase of the planned N-9 condom study will be completed by February 2008 and the second phase, which will take about 17 weeks, will begin after the FDA analyzes the first study, according to FDA spokeswoman Peper Long.

A number of AIDS organizations have joined with the Global Campaign in calling for the removal of N-9 from condoms.

N-9 was once promoted as a way to reduce the risk of HIV transmission after it was shown to kill the AIDS virus in laboratory studies. But subsequent studies on humans showed it had just the opposite ef-

fect because it stripped the protective cells lining the rectum and vagina, leaving the user at a greater risk of HIV transmission.

The FDA says that the rule governing contraceptive products other than condoms is being finalized following a public comment period. The agency expects the rule will take effect on June 19, 2008.

Although condoms containing N-9 will not be affected by the new rule, the N-9 contraceptive products will include the following warning: "Use a latex condom without nonoxynol-9 if you or your sex partner has HIV/AIDS, multiple sex partners, or other HIV risk factors."

In its exhaustive 2001 report on N-9, the World Health Organization found that N-9 condoms do not provide users with any additional contraceptive benefit and "should not be promoted."

N-9 was once included in lubricants that were marketed to gay men. After a series of articles in 2002 about the health risks of N-9, all three major manufacturers who were producing N-9 lube agreed to stop. Most manufacturers of N-9 condoms including Mayer Laboratories, which produces Kimono Condoms, as well as the corporate giants, Durex and Johnson and Johnson, have voluntarily stopped producing N-9 condoms.

Contrary to the WHO report, the manufacturers who still make N-9 condoms, Church and Dwight and Ansell, have maintained that N-9 condoms provide an additional contraceptive benefit. The corporations reiterated that claim in 2006 in advisory letters to the FDA on N-9 condom labeling.

Forbes said that those corporations are making an "intuitive leap." Forbes said there is no evidence that the small amount of N-9 in condoms provides any benefit to the consumer.

Gay Adoption Ban Bill Expected as Tennessee Lawmakers Return

Tennessee lawmakers returned to the legislature Jan 8 with Republicans threatening to take up a bill that would bar gays and lesbians from adopting or serving as foster parents.

Democ??rats hold a 53-46 advantage in the House, while the two parties are tied at 16 each in the Senate, with one independent.

In an election year, both parties are jockeying to find issues on which to campaign.

An attempt to pass legislation banning gays from adopting failed in 2005.

Supporters of the measure said the children would be better off remaining in orphanages than being with a gay parent.

The bill was later amended to say only that married couples should be given priority in adoptions. It died in committee.

There are an estimated 9,000 in state custody. In 2006 slightly over 1,000 children in state custody were adopted. Figures for 2007 have not

been released.

House Speaker Jimmy Naifeh (D-Covington) said he is opposed to legislation curtailing gay adoption. Without his support, it is unlikely the measure would reach a vote on the floor of the House.

Last October Attorney General Bob Cooper released a legal opinion that said there is nothing in the Tennessee Constitution or in state law to prevent same-sex couples from becoming adoptive parents.

Cooper had been asked for the legal assessment by Wilson County Circuit Judge Clara Byrd.

Although Byrd has not said why she asked for the opinion, it has been generally assumed she is presiding over an adoption application by either a gay person or a same-sex couple. Adoption cases are sealed

to protect the rights of children.

Cooper in his legal opinion said that under current state law anyone 18 years of age or older may adopt, assuming the adoption is found to be in the best interest of the child."

"There is no prohibition in Tennessee statutes against adoption by a same-sex couple," he said.

He also noted that before a judge grants an adoption there must be a finding that the adoptive parents "are fit persons to have the care and custody of the child."

Socially conservative groups that won a state constitutional ban on same-sex marriage say that if the legislature does not pass an adoption bill, they will begin collecting signatures for a constitutional amendment barring gays from adopting in the Tennessee.

Logo Announces Television Series Based on Play, Film *Sordid Lives*

Gay-themed cable channel Logo has announced a new scripted series based on the play *Sordid Lives*.

The new series, entitled *Sordid Lives: The Series*, will span twelve episodes, all written by original play author Del Shores, who will also direct.

The series is set to star Olivia Newton-John (who will also contribute five original songs to the show), Caroline Rhea, Bonnie Bedelia, Beth Grant and *The Golden Girls'* Rue McClanahan.

Many of the series cast are veterans of the stage play and the film, including Leslie Jordan, who will guest star in a reprise of his role as "Brother Boy."

Other guest stars for the show are set to include Margaret Cho, Carson Kressley and Georgette Jones, who will portray her mother

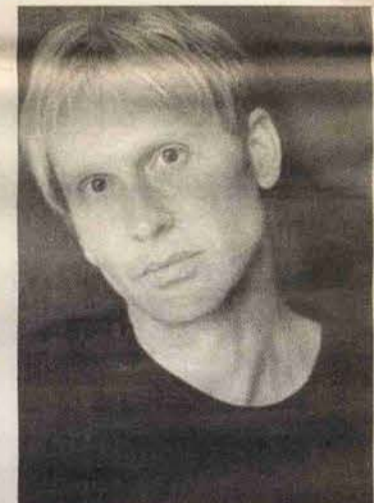
Tammy Wynette in a dream sequence.

In 2000, Shores also wrote and directed a film version of his play.

Logo is owned by MTV Networks. Said the president of MTV Networks Music Group Entertainment Brian Graden, who is also the president of Logo, "These TV and film icons populate Del Shores' amplified southern family brilliantly."

Logo is not carried on Comcast cable in the Mid-south area, but is available on satellite-delivered services.

The show's press release offers these details: "*Sordid Lives: The Series'* 12 half-hour episodes are a



Del Shores

humorous look at a dysfunctional family and the denizens of Winters, Tex., as well as an institutionalized brother (Jordan) who channels Tammy Wynette (Jones)."

Adds the release, "The series also chronicles the handsome young son of one of the sisters (Bedelia) who is struggling with coming out to his Texas Republican Baptist family while pursuing an acting career in Los Angeles."

The series, currently in production on location in Louisiana, is slated for a fall premiere.



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Thank!

HRC Highlights Best Places to Work for 2008

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation has released its annual list of the "Best Places to Work for GLBT Equality." A total of 195 companies that achieve this honor will use the 2008 "Best Places to Work for GLBT Equality" seal to distinguish their company as a fair-minded employer.

The seal is given to companies who score a perfect 100 percent on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index which measures policies and practices implemented to promote fairness and equality in the workplace for GLBT employees.

"We honor the companies awarded for being the 'Best Places to Work for GLBT Equality,'" said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "These companies are working hard to transform their workplaces and make them safer for millions of employees around the country. We can now say that at least 10 million employees are protected on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity on the job."

The 2008 Corporate Equality Index report, released this past fall, awarded an unprecedented 195

major U.S. businesses the top rating of 100 percent, up from 138 last year—a 41 percent increase. One of the CEI's major findings was that a majority of rated employers now offer workplace protections on the basis of gender identity — 58 percent. That number has increased from just 29 percent in 2005.

Some of the companies on the list this year include: Boeing, US Airways, Macy's, Ford Motor Company, American Express, IBM, Apple, Microsoft, Ernst & Young LLP, Walt Disney, Yahoo!, Google, Coca-Cola, Aetna, and Kimpton Hotel & Restaurant Group.

To see a complete listing of companies who received the 2008 "Best Places to Work for GLBT Equality" seal and to find an image of the seal, visit: www.hrc.org/placestowork.

Dykes on Bikes' Challenge Fails

A San Francisco motorcycle club gained long-sought legal approval for its trademark of the name "Dykes on Bikes" when the U.S. Supreme Court turned away a challenge from a lawyer who said the term denigrated men.

Without comment, the justices denied review of an appeal by Michael McDermott of Dublin, who challenged a decision by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to grant the San Francisco Women's Motorcycle Contingent exclusive rights over the commercial use of Dykes on Bikes.

The motorcycle club applied for a trademark in 2003 after using Dykes on Bikes for three decades as the moniker of the motorized unit that leads San Francisco's annual Gay Pride Parade. The club's attorney, Gregory Gilchrist, said the group had no business plans for the

phrase but decided to seek legal protection after an offshoot group, now independent, discussed putting the name on T-shirts for sale.

The trademark office initially rejected the application, saying the name was disparaging to lesbians, but approved it in January 2006 after the club submitted evidence that activists were trying to reclaim "dykes" as a term of pride. Gilchrist said the lawyers pointed out that the office had approved trademarks for other once-derogatory terms — for example, the television show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*.

Lobbying 101

Continued from p. 1

tatives. Advancing Equality Day is your opportunity to witness state government at work and advocate for fair legislation with your elected representatives.

Shelby County sends more legislators to the General Assembly than any other county in the state. The Shelby County Committee of TEP has set a challenging goal of sending 50 people from our area to Legislative Plaza in Nashville

on Advancing Equality Day. Mark your calendar today so you can make a difference for you and your loved ones.

Sign up for "Lobbying 101" or Advancing Equality Day or receive more information by contacting the Shelby County Committee of TEP at shelbycounty@tnequalityproject.com or by visiting www.tnep.org.

Members of the Shelby County Committee of TEP contributed to this story.

Huckabee's Ties to Extremists Under Scrutiny After Victory in Iowa

TruthWinsOut.org has called on Mike Huckabee to explain his close association to prominent members of the Christian Reconstructionist movement — which believes Old Testament law should replace the Constitution and that the Bible also justifies corporal or capital punishment for adulterers and homosexuals, among others.

"Huckabee should explain why he is socially and professionally associating with known extremists and how this squares with his professed sunny and optimistic vision for America," said Besen. "While Huckabee makes jokes on the campaign trail, his ties to the fundamentalist fringe is no laughing matter. We hope the media will continue to explore the radical associates of Mike Huckabee."

In 1998, Mike Huckabee co-wrote the book, *Kids Who Kill* with Reconstructionist author George Grant. Grant is an ideologue with extreme, even dangerous religious views. The question is, does the former Arkansas governor share

Grant's view of the role of Christianity in government? This passage is from Grant's 1987 book *The Changing of the Guard*.

"Christians have an obligation, a mandate, a commission, a holy responsibility to reclaim the land for Jesus Christ — to have dominion in the civil structures, just as in every other aspect of life and godliness. But it is dominion that we are after. Not just a voice. It is dominion we are after. Not just influence. It is dominion we are after. Not just equal time. It is dominion we are after. World conquest. That's what Christ has commissioned us to accomplish."

The Cato Institute also reported

that Huckabee held a fundraiser at the Houston home of Dr. Steven Hotze, another leader of the radical Reconstructionist movement.

"There is a disturbing pattern developing that needs to be further investigated," said Besen. "With Huckabee's stunning victory in Iowa, it is crucial that we learn more about what this candidate truly stands for and why he associates with people who promote religious extremism."

TruthWinsOut.org is a non-profit organization that counters right wing propaganda, exposes the "ex-gay" myth and educates America about gay life. For more information, visit <http://www.truthwinsout.org/>.

ACLU Demands Virginia High School Stop Censoring Gay Student

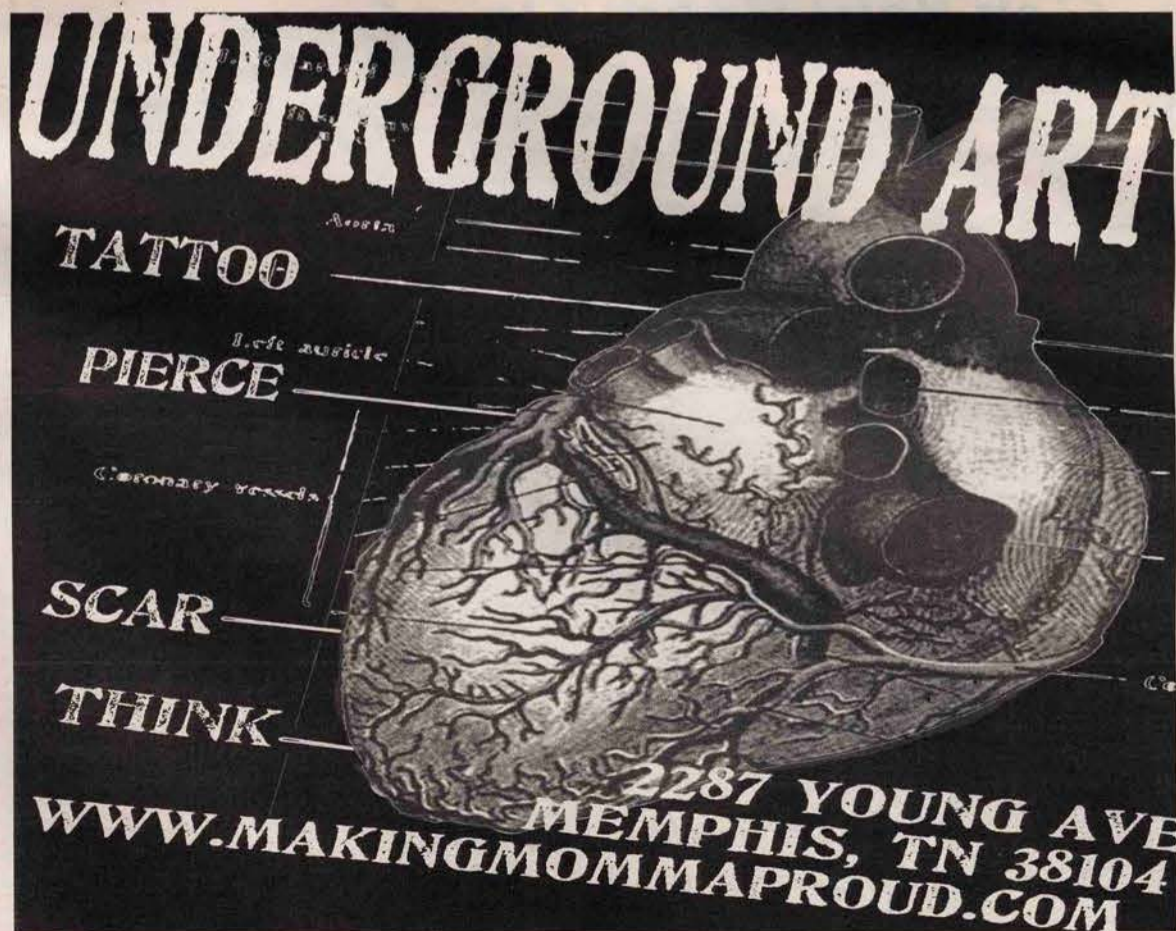
The American Civil Liberties Union has demanded that a high school that punished a student for wearing a t-shirt featuring a lesbian pride symbol apologize to the student and guarantee that it will no longer illegally censor her in the future.

School officials at I.C. Norcom High School had threatened the 17-year-old senior with suspension because a teacher was upset by her t-shirt, which bears an image of two overlapping female gender symbols.

"When my teacher told me she

wanted me to turn my shirt inside-out or cover it up, I was confused, because I've worn that shirt to school several times before and nobody ever said a word about it," said Bethany Laccone, who attends a different school full-time but goes to Norcom High

every morning for a hotel management class. "I wear that shirt because I want people to know that I'm proud of being a lesbian and comfortable with who I am. And I have the same Constitutional right to free speech as any other student."



6 Moroccan Men Sentenced for 'Homosexuality'

Criminal verdicts in Morocco against six men sentenced to prison for homosexual conduct should be set aside and the men released an international human rights organization said Dec. 12.

A court in Ksar el-Kbir, a small city about 120 kilometers south of Tangiers, has convicted the men of violating Morocco's penal code, which criminalizes "lewd or unnatural acts with an individual of the same sex".

The court sentenced three defendants to six months in prison and two defendants to four months; it sentenced the sixth, who it also convicted of the unauthorized sale of alcohol, to 10 months. The defendants range in age from 20 to 61 years old.

According to lawyers for the defendants, the prosecution failed to present any evidence that the men actually had engaged in the prohibited conduct.

"These men are behind bars for private acts between consenting adults that no government has any business criminalizing in the first place," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East and North Africa di-

rector at Human Rights Watch.

"The men's rights to privacy and freedom of expression have been violated, and the court has convicted them without apparent evidence; they should be set free."

The men have been in jail since they were first arrested by the police between Nov. 23 and 25, after a video circulated online purporting to show a private party, allegedly including the men, taking place in Ksar el-Kbir on November 18.

Press reports claimed the party was a "gay marriage."

Following the arrests, hundreds of men and women marched through the streets of Ksar el-Kbir, denouncing the men's alleged actions and calling for their punishment.

The video showed no indications of sexual activity.

The men all pleaded innocent. At the trial, the judge refused to re-

lease the men provisionally pending their appeals.

Criminalizing consensual, adult homosexual conduct violates human rights protection in international law, Human Rights Watch said.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Morocco has ratified, bars interference with the right to privacy. The United Nations Human Rights Committee has condemned laws against consensual homosexual conduct as violations of the ICCPR. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has held that arrests for consensual homosexual conduct are, by definition, human rights violations.

In the preamble to its constitution, Morocco "subscribes to the principles, rights, and obligations" consequent on its membership in organizations including the United Nations "and reaffirms its attachment to human rights as they are universally recognized."

"In applying an unjust law in an unjust fashion, the Ksar el-Kbir court has fueled the forces of intolerance in Morocco," said Whitson.

"If Morocco truly aspires to be a regional leader on human rights, it should lead the way in decriminalizing homosexual conduct."

Pope's Message: Gay Weddings Threaten Peace

The annual message from the head of the Roman Catholic Church to the world has been delivered. Pope Benedict's statement marked World Peace Day on Jan. 1.

The message is entitled "The Human Family, A Community of Peace," and in it he calls for the dismantling of nuclear weapons and environmental co-operation and describes gay marriage as "an obstacle on the road to peace."

The 80-year-old German-born pontiff theorizes that peace and the family are inherently linked and any threat to the "traditional family" will be opposed by Catholics.

Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, explained the thinking behind the Papal statement to journalists.

"Many legislative initiatives work against peace by weakening the family founded on marriage between a man and a woman, by directly or indirectly forcing families not to be open to accepting a morally responsible life, or by not



Pope Benedict XVI

recognizing the family as having primary responsibility in the education of children," he said.

The Pope's message emphasizes his opposition to gay and lesbian relationships.

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Archbishop of Canterbury: No Change Over Gay Bishop

The archbishop of Canterbury said Dec. 14 he will not reverse his decision to exclude a gay U.S. bishop from joining other bishops at a global Anglican gathering next year.

The Episcopal Church, the Anglican body in the U.S., caused an uproar in 2003 by consecrating the first openly gay bishop, V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire.

Anglicans are now on the brink of schism, and attendance at next

year's assembly, called the Lambeth Conference, has become a focus of the tension. Theological conservatives and liberals have separately threatened to boycott the meeting because of who was and wasn't invited.

"For a long time I thought I wanted to be a nun. Then I realized that what I really wanted to be was a lesbian."
— Mabel Maney

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HURRY... IT WILL GO FAST!

Gay Rights Legislation on Agenda as Congress Returns

Members of Congress began returning to Washington on Jan 14 with three LGBT rights bill still in play — the Matthew Shepard Hate Crime Act, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

Whether any of them advance will be up to the will of the Democratic leadership in the House and Senate.

The Democratic-led House reconvened Jan. 15. The Senate returns Jan. 22.

The Matthew Shepard Hate Crime Act was named for the 21-year-old college student who was murdered in an anti-gay hate crime in Wyoming in October 1998. It would have added sexuality to the list of categories covered under federal hate crime law.

The bill passed the House in May and the White House threatened to veto it. In an effort to get around a veto the Senate version was tied to the 2008 defense authorization bill. It passed in September and then went to conference where it was stripped out.

Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) has pledged to reintroduce the bill before the session ends.

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, or ENDA, passed the House in November, but without protections for the transgendered.

The legislation would make it illegal for employers to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in hiring, firing, promoting or paying an employee.

Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) has indicated he wants to introduce a Senate version before the session ends but it is unlikely it would come to a final vote before the session ends in the fall. The White House also has indicated the president would veto ENDA if it is passed.

Legislation to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" the ban on gays serving openly in the military is still in committee. The bill has bipartisan support with 136 sponsors.

DADT was enacted in 1993. Since then more than 12,000 servicemembers have been dismissed when it was learned they are gay. According to statistics from the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network which advocates for gays in the military, an average of two service members are dismissed under the law every day.

All three bills could be pushed aside as Democrats struggle to deal with a sinking economy, a lingering war and election-year politics.

The Democratic-led House reconvened with the familiar scenario of having to deal with a President Bush veto. The White House ob-

jected to one provision in a massive defense bill that opened the way for lawsuits against the Iraqi government.

The defense bill contains an additional pay raise for the military, and Congress is expected to quickly fix the problem, either with a veto override vote — that would probably fail — or by removing the offending provision.

House Democrats are planning a vote the following week on overriding Bush's second veto of legislation to expand the federal child health insurance program. The bill passed by a veto-proof margin in the Senate, but enough Republicans in the House have stuck with Bush to stop an override there.

Such legislative exercises had numerous precedents in 2007, when presidential vetoes — or veto threats — and Republican filibusters in the Senate blocked Democratic-proposed legislation or forced major changes.

Democrats claimed several successes in their first year in power, including raising the minimum wage, boosting fuel mileage standards for cars and small trucks, increasing security at seaports and airports, reducing student loan interest rates and requiring stricter mental health checks for gun purchases.

The Senate returns Jan. 22 to deal with a particularly divisive issue, renewal of a six-month law defining electronic surveillance powers. The law is due to expire Feb. 1.

Anti-Gay Petition Signatures Becoming Harder to Get

The same-sex marriage ban in Florida may not happen in 2008 because another petition drive by conservative moralists is failing.

Signature collection is getting more difficult for right-wing extremists on both coasts. A group in California has failed to garner enough support to remove recently enacted civil rights protections.

The *Orlando Sentinel* reports that a conservative group backing the gay-marriage ban has failed to collect the appropriate number of signatures necessary to place a constitutional amendment — to ban gay marriage — on the 2008 ballot.

Although the group announced

Staph Bug Hitting Gay Men Hardest

A new variety of staph bacteria, highly resistant to antibiotics and possibly transmitted by sexual contact, is spreading among gay men in San Francisco, Boston, New York and Los Angeles, researchers reported Jan. 14.

The study released online by the journal *Annals of Internal Medicine* found the highest concentrations of infection by the drug-resistant bug in and around San Francisco's Castro District, and among patients who visit health clinics that treat HIV infections among gay men in San Francisco and Boston.

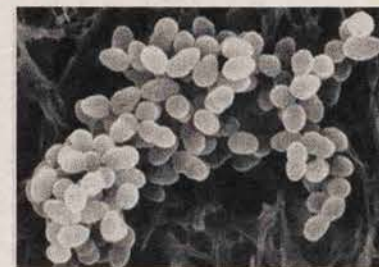
The culprit is a form of MRSA, or Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus, a bug that was once confined to hospitalized patients but, since the late 1990s, has been circulating outside medical settings, afflicting anyone from injection drug users to elementary school students. A strain called USA300 has been a leading cause of MRSA infection in this decade, and an exceptionally drug-resistant variant of it is now on the loose.

The study estimated that one in 588 residents living within the Castro neighborhood Zip code area is infected with that variant, which is resistant to six types of commonly used antibiotics. The risk of contracting this difficult-to-treat bug is 13-fold higher for gay men compared to the rest of the city's population, researchers found.

"We probably had it here first, and now it is spreading elsewhere," said Binh An Diep, a researcher at San Francisco General Hospital and lead author of the report. "This is a national problem, and San Francisco is at the epicenter."

The germ typically causes boils and other skin and soft-tissue in-

fections, and, despite its resistance to some drugs, is still treatable by surgical drainage and several classes of antibiotics. What is unusual in this case is the high percentage of infections - up to 40 percent — occurring in the buttocks and genitalia.



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Sat, Jan 26, at 1 p.m. at MGLCC.

"TEP's Advancing Equality Day on the Hill"
in Nashville will be held Tues., Feb. 19.

Why Political Party Matters

Commentary by Jim Maynard

Anthony Childress has written two columns in the *Triangle Journal*: "Why I'm Still A Republican" (September 2007) and "Tis the Season To Be...Honest" (December 2007) to express his rationalizations for supporting the Republican Party despite its anti-gay platform and its attacks on LGBT civil rights. He admits that if he were to vote solely on gay rights he would vote Democratic. He admits that the Democratic Party is more accepting of gays than the GOP. So what excuses does he give for supporting the Republican Party? Like other conservative gay Republicans, Childress re-creates history and reality to suite his personal needs, and ignores inconvenient political facts.

First, he claims that while the Democrats are more accepting of gays and more willing to address issues that concern gays and lesbians than the GOP, they "have no intention of ever taking steps to make their promises become law." He blames the Democrats and Bill Clinton for "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and breaking their promises to the gay community. Didn't the Republican Party attack Bill Clinton for supporting the "gay agenda," and block his attempt to change the military's anti-gay policy?

Clinton was forced to compromise with conservatives and the military to allow gays to serve as long as their gay identity was private ("Don't Ask, Don't Tell"). At the time the DADT policy was a step forward. It was supposed to allow gays to serve and stop the military's anti-gay witch-hunts. Unfortunately, the military did not follow the policy. Bill Clinton and all the Democratic candidates now oppose the policy and the Democratic Party platform supports the right of gays to serve in the military.

The Republican Party continues to oppose the right of gays to serve in the military and all of the GOP candidates now support DADT. So why are gay Republican still attacking Clinton and the Democrats for DADT, but supporting the Republican Party which blocked Clinton from lifting the ban on gays in the military and now supports DADT?

Despite the DADT misstep, Bill Clinton did more for gays than any president ever has. He was the first presidential candidate to make gay rights part of his campaign platform and spoke for gay equality in his State of the Union speeches, something no Republican president seems likely to do. He issued a policy to prohibit discrimination against gays in the federal government, a dramatic change from the oppressive Reagan years. I wish he hadn't compromised with Republicans so much, especially on DADT, NAFTA and welfare "reform."

Gay Republicans argue that Democrats make promises to gays they don't intend to keep and have no intention of passing any laws. Wrong again. The Democratic Party has made LGBT issues an important part of their platform. While the Re-

publican Party blocked any LGBT civil rights legislation when they controlled Congress, the Democrats have already passed a hate crime bill and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Both bills have passed in the House of Representatives and the hate crime bill passed in the Senate. Neither bill would have passed under a Republican Congress!

However, the Republicans have threatened to filibuster these bills and George Bush has threatened to veto them. So even though the Democrats have a slim majority in the House and Senate, they do not have enough votes yet to override Republican filibusters or overturn a veto by George Bush. So do you think we need to elect more anti-gay Republicans or elect more Democrats to overturn the GOP filibusters and Bush's veto?

Furthermore, Democrats have led efforts to pass LGBT civil rights laws across the country, with little or no Republican support and against the opposition of the GOP. I wish the Democrats could do more, but I will support the party that is trying to defend my rights over a party that *opposes* my rights.

Childress claims that the real work for gay rights is taking place in the Republican Party. Really? According to the Human Rights Campaign scorecards over the past 10 years, Democrats have dramatically *increased* their support of gay rights, while Republicans have *decreased* their support! (The percentage of Congressional Democrats with a 100 percent HRC rating increased from 27 percent to 72 percent, while the percentage of Congressional Republicans with a 0 (zero) percent rating *increased* from 46 percent to 61 percent!

Childress states that gay Republicans do not flee their party for one simple reason—"reality." Well, here's a reality check: *Political Party Matters!* It matters which party controls Congress and which party wins the White House! It matters which party chairs the committees that determine what bills get voted on. It matters which party appoints federal judges. The political reality is that the Democratic Party is more likely to push LGBT issues and the Republican Party will try to block them. The Republican Party, *not* the Democratic Party, attacks candidates who support gay rights!

Have gay Republicans not read the Republican Party platform? Here is the Republican Party Platform on gay issues: "We do not believe sexual preference should be given special legal protections or standing in the law. We affirm that homosexuality is incompatible with military service. We support traditional definitions of marriage and appointment of judges who respect traditional family values."

Now here's the Democratic Party Platform on gay issues: "We support the full inclusion of gay and lesbian families in the life of our nation and seek equal responsibilities, benefits and protections for these families.

We will enact legislation barring workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation." Now which party platform do *you* support?

Gay Republicans have to admit that the Democratic Party is more supportive of gay rights than the Republican Party. So why do "homocons" still cling to the Republican Party like battered wives? Because, they argue, they are not focused on single issues (i.e., gay rights) and support the "principles" of the Republican Party: strong national defense, fiscal responsibility (i.e., anti-tax and less spending), and being tough on crime. None of these rationalizations hold up to a careful scrutiny.

First, surely no one believes that the GOP is fiscally responsible do they? Remember that Ronald Reagan promised to balance the budget and left more national debt than *all* prior presidents combined! Reaganomics demonstrated that if you (a) cut taxes, mostly on the rich and (b) increase spending (mostly on military) you get *more debt!* (Reagan did raise taxes on the working class, including Social Security taxes.)

Bill Clinton raised taxes on the top tax bracket, cut taxes on the working poor, and *balanced* the federal budget! Clinton left a budget *surplus!* In the words of Allan Greenspan, Clinton was a better "Republican" president than Bush or Reagan! By the way, the economy grew more under Clinton than it did under Reagan!

With the support of gay Republicans, George reversed Clinton's policies and returned to Reagan's failed policies. He cut taxes mainly on the rich, increased military spending, and presto—record *deficits!* Now Bush, with the help of the *Republican* Congress, has accumulated more *debt* than *all* prior presidents combined!

At an MGLCC town hall meeting after the 2004 election, gay Republicans gave their rationalizations for supporting Bush. They bought into the "war on terror" and the administration's lies about Iraq. They supported the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq. Like Childress, they also claimed a "strong national defense" as a reason to support the GOP.

I would like to ask them, how can you support *increasing* military spending, but also demand that the government *cut* your taxes? If you support *more* federal spending to fight this "war on terror" and invade other countries, shouldn't you be willing to "sacrifice" and help *pay* for the government spending *pay* want to increase? If not, you have no basis on which to lecture Democrats on "fiscal responsibility."

I was baffled to hear gay Republicans support Bush because of the terrorist attack on 9/11. Who was president when we were attacked? Bush had been president for almost a year and ignored repeated warnings of an imminent terrorist attack that could involve flying planes into buildings! Dick Cheney was in charge of a terrorist task force that *never* met before 9/11! In fact, Bush and Cheney were already planning an attack on Iraq before 9/11 and they failed to focus on Al Qaeda as the Clinton administration warned them to do.

Bush and Cheney failed to "defend" us against terrorism, and their illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq has increased the threat of terrorism against us.

Is the Republican Party really "tougher on crime" than the Democrats? Name me one Democrat who is opposed to punishing crime? Didn't Clinton have to *fight* Republicans to get 100,000 more police officers on the streets to fight crime? Clinton also pushed the "three strikes you're out" law. Didn't the crime rates *fall* under Clinton? And how can a party claim to be "tough on crime" when it fails to punish its own?

So what really divides conservative gay Republicans and liberal/progressive gay Democrats? Gay Republicans claim to oppose "big government" (except military which they want more of), and emphasize "individual determination" to solve problems rather than government programs. I think this touches on the big difference between us, so let me expound on it.

Liberals have always believed in "community," the "common good," the "social contract." People are not just greedy individuals looking out for themselves. The United States was founded on liberal principles: freedom, equality and democracy. "We the People" formed a government to work for the "common welfare" of all. People should be rewarded for their work and be responsible. We should contribute as much as we can to society, but no one should be denied basic necessities because of their lack of wealth.

Gay Republicans side with the conservatives. As Anthony Childress wrote in the *Triangle Journal*, they value "the individual" over the community or society. They emphasize individualism over collective action. Childress argues that we should not depend upon government for our civil rights, but civil rights have always required government action! Would he tell African-Americans in the 1960s to depend on themselves, not government, to gain their civil rights?

Gay Democrats side with liberals and progressives who believe that democratic government ("We the People") should care for the common good, the general welfare. We believe that "individuals" are not on their own; they should not be denied basic necessities like healthcare based on their ability to pay for it. We believe health care is a "right" not a commodity that "individuals" can sell for a profit and deny to those who cannot afford it.

I agree with Childress that we should look beyond "gay issues" when we vote. I support the Democratic Party not just because it is more supportive of "gay rights," but also because it is more supportive of labor, the poor, women, minorities and the environment. As a socialist, I am not totally happy with the Democratic Party and am critical of its failures to defend progressive principles at times.

Every movement for social justice and equality, including the gay rights movement, has been born out of liberal and progressive/left political movements. I challenge you to find

one civil rights or social justice movement that has been led by conservatives!

Has the Republican Party supported "civil rights" since Abraham Lincoln broke his pledge to slave owners and issued the Emancipation Proclamation? Ronald Reagan, like most conservative Republicans, opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. When LBJ embraced the civil rights movement, the Democrats lost the south. Under Nixon, the Republican Party shifted political strategy to win the South by appealing to racial bigotry. The race-baiting Southern strategy of Goldwater and Nixon is why the Republican Party now controls the South.

The Republican Party attacks gays and racial minorities to win white conservative votes. They use wedge issues like "gay marriage" and abortion to win the support of poor and working class whites so they can implement policies that benefit the rich. It was Ronald Reagan who sold the Republican Party out to the Christian Right. The Republican Party has been taken over by Christian fundamentalists who are waging a "cultural war" against gays, non-Christians and racial minorities!

I also believe in "personal responsibility," and I believe that those who support the Republican Party and its neo-con, anti-gay agenda should be held responsible for the consequences of their political support of an anti-gay party that panders to religious fundamentalists to win elections. The Christian Right would not have the political power they have in the Republican Party if not for the support of the GOP for "moderates" and gay Republicans.

If Childress and other gay Republicans care more about their individual welfare than the "gay community," they should not be surprised when some of us are not "tolerant" of those who sell us out for a "strong national defense," tax cuts or other Republican neo-con "principles."

While we have a lot of work to do in the Democratic Party, I'm proud that our party is trying to defend the liberal principles of equality and social justice. I'm proud to be part of a liberal tradition, from FDR to Martin Luther King, which believes in a strong government to defend the "common welfare" of all, regardless of wealth, race, sex or social class. I wish the Republican Party shared those principles, but it does not.

The political reality is that the Republican Party opposes equal civil rights for gays and lesbians and the Democratic Party supports our civil rights. Democrats in Congress and in states and municipalities across the country have worked for and passed laws protecting LGBT civil rights, usually with little or no Republican support. All of the Democratic presidential candidates support equality for LGBT people, while all of the GOP candidates have sided with the Christian Right to oppose our rights.

Contrary to Log Cabin Republican propaganda, political party *does* matter!

Jim Maynard is president of the Memphis Stonewall Democrats (www.memphisstonewalldemocrats.org)

Trans Student Accuses College of Discrimination

A transgendered student says he is the victim of discrimination at a small Massachusetts community college because he is biologically female.

Ethan Santiago says that Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill, Mass., is refusing to let him to use the men's locker room.

Santiago, 20, began transitioning two years ago and has recently begun hormone treatment.

He presents as male and wears men's clothing.

But because he still has female sex organs the college says that he is in danger of being sexually assaulted in the men's changing

room.

"I've never been beaten up," Santiago tells the *Eagle-Tribune* newspaper. "But I figure that some day I will probably be beaten up. That's a fact of life for me and I'm not afraid."

Santiago says that he would feel uncomfortable using the women's locker room.

"I just want people to see me the way I see myself," he told the paper.

Poll: Republicans Have Sex More Often

We know people have issues with polling in general and with pollster Frank Luntz in particular, but sometimes survey results are just too important to ignore.

In a poll that appear in current issue of *Playboy*, Luntz says that more Republicans than Democrats have sex at least once a week. Fifty-five percent of Republicans but only 43 percent of Democrats report hooking up at least weekly. On the other hand, 67 percent of Democrats but only 51 percent of Republican say they've watched porn with their partners.

Do Republicans and Democrats see eye-to-eye on anything sexual? Yes. Twenty-three percent of Re-

publicans and 24 percent of Democrats say they'd probably have a one-night stand with a president if they found that person physically and sexually attractive.

Which presidents fit that bill? Luntz's respondents overwhelmingly picked Bill Clinton as the sexiest president of the past 40 years, with Ronald Reagan a very distant second. The least sexy president? Richard Nixon, with Clinton second.

Ewan McGregor and Jim Carrey Sign Up for Gay Roles

A new Hollywood movie, already dubbed *Brokeback Prison*, will see comedian Jim Carrey play a married prisoner who falls in love with another inmate, played by British actor Ewan McGregor.

Production is due to begin on *I Love You Phillip Morris* in the spring.

It is based on the true story of Steve Russell, a convicted conman, who fell for his cellmate, the Morris of the film's title.

When Morris was released, Russell broke out of jail four times to try to be reunited with him, lead-

ing him to be locked up for a 144-year sentence.

On one occasion, he faked his own death to escape and on another occasion colored his entire uniform green to make them look like surgery scrubs.

"It's an unusual love story," McGregor told *The Star*.

Mainstream Press Reports on Ron Paul's Anti-Gay Screeds

Ron Paul's anti-gay, anti-black, anti-Semite newsletter articles: how much did Paul himself write?

Linked to Christian Reconstructionists (people who want to toss law as we know it and replace it with Old Testament-based codes of justice) and various conspiracy theorists, and the supposed author of newsletters that have insulted blacks, Jews, and others, evidence of 2008 hopeful Ron Paul's anti-gay bias is coming to light in the press.

In an article published Jan. 8, *The New Republic* examined an archive of newsletters seemingly published under Paul's auspices, and though many articles do not bear a by-line (and the article said that Paul had distanced himself from some of the content of the newsletters), the question remains as to whether Paul knew much of what was being written in the newsletters.

The New Republic article states that the newsletters have been published under a variety of titles, more or less monthly, since two years after Paul was initially elected to Congress in 1976, but most, if not all, of the titles have featured Ron Paul's name, from the folksy *Ron Paul's Freedom Report* to the frankly alarmist-sounding *Ron Paul Survival Report*.

The article offers a wealth of detail about the offhanded insults (and sometimes shocking vitriol) that the newsletters have dished out to minorities of various sorts over the years, and includes a section dedicated to what Paul's newsletter had to say about gays.

The newsletter articles cited, and praised, Rep. William Dannemeyer, who had advocated quarantining people living with AIDS, saying of Dannemeyer that he had spoken "out fearlessly despite the organized power of the gay lobby."

Other articles attributed to Paul's newsletters mocked the ACT-UP motto "Silence = Death," asking, "Shouldn't it be 'Sodomy = Death?'" according to *The New Republic*, while another article claimed that gays had intentionally set out to "poison the blood sup-

ply" by tainting it with HIV.

While many conservatives and Christians see AIDS and homosexuality in terms of some sort of chosen "lifestyle," Paul's newsletters evidently took this one step further and depicted AIDS as part of the gay life plan. *The New Republic* article included the following excerpt in its exposé: "[Gay] men don't really see a reason to live past their fifties. They are not married, they have no children, and their lives are centered on new sexual partners."

According to the *The New Republic*, an article entitled "The Pink House?" lamented President Bush (senior, not junior) signing into law a hate crimes measure and then allowing "the heads of homosexual lobbying groups to the White House for the ceremony," with "I miss the closet" appearing afterwards.

The New Republic quoted further from "The Pink House?," unearthing this gem: "Homosexuals, not to speak of the rest of society, were far better off when social pressure forced them to hide their activities."

As retrograde as Paul's newsletters might have been about such matters, it did allow that gays might be able to serve in uniform... under certain conditions, that is: "Homosexuals, if admitted, should be put in a special category and not allowed in close physical contact with heterosexuals," *The New Republic* quoted one article as saying.

The New Republic noted that Paul has commanded attention for being a "straight talker," which, in light of the quotations from Paul's newsletters, brings a new sense of meaning to the word "straight."

However, as *The New Republic* article summed up in its final paragraphs, "Ron Paul is not going to be president. But, as his campaign has gathered steam, he has found himself increasingly permitted inside the boundaries of respectable debate."

Continued *The New Republic*, "From his newsletters, however, a different picture of Paul emerges—that of someone who is either himself deeply embittered or, for a long time, allowed others to write bitterly on his behalf."

Concluded *The New Republic* article, "Maybe such outbursts mean Ron Paul really is a straight talker. Or maybe they just mean he is a man filled with hate."

Gay conservative columnist and writer Andrew Sullivan came to Paul's defense in his *Atlantic.com* column "The Daily Dish" (andrewsullivan.theatlantic.com/the-daily-dish/2008/01/ron-paul-expose.html), saying, "Paul needs to say not only that he did not pen these excrescences, he needs to explain how his name was on them and disown them completely."

Continued Sullivan, "I've supported Paul for what I believe are honorable reasons: his brave resistance to the enforced uniformity of opinion on the Iraq war, his defense of limited constitutional government, his libertarianism, his sincerity."

"If there is some other agenda lurking beneath all this, we deserve to know. It's up to Ron Paul now to clearly explain and disown these ugly, vile, despicable tracts from the past," added Sullivan.

As part of his defense of Paul, Sullivan zeroed in on a passage from *The New Republic* article in which doubt was cast on how much of Paul's own thinking went into the newsletter articles. A spokesperson for Paul was quoted as saying that Ron Paul had expressed "various levels of approval" to the articles in his newsletters. In some instances, the spokesman said, that meant "no approval," whereas in other cases, Paul "Actually wrote it himself."

As to what the spokesperson called "the incendiary stuff," the claim was that: "A lot of [the articles appearing in the newsletters] he did not see."

Tennessee Presidential Preference Primary Tues., Feb. 5

You must already be registered to vote in this primary.

U.S. Military Mum on Gay DADT Policy

The U.S. military apparently is not enforcing its policy of discharging gay soldiers who speak of their sexual orientation, USA Today reported Jan 8.

The report cited the case of Army Sgt. Darren Manzella, who appeared on the CBS program *60 Minutes* in December. In the interview, Manzella said his fellow soldiers knew he was gay and showed a home video of him kissing his boyfriend.

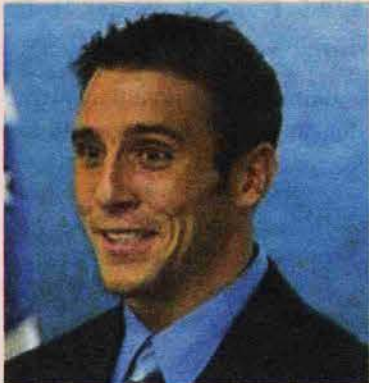
He told *USA Today* he told his commander he was gay in 2006, and the Army investigated and

saw the kissing home video.

"They found 'no evidence of homosexuality,'" Manzella said.

U.S. President Bill Clinton approved the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in 1993 and about 12,000 troops have since been discharged for saying they were gay, the report said.

Eugene Fidell of the National Institute of Military Justice, a



Sgt. Darren Manzella

group of military legal experts, said with wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, discharging troops was questionable.

"Military managers may be turning a blind eye because it's a nuisance and we need these people," he said to *USA Today*.

Mid-South Pride to Host Prides of the Southeast Conference

Mid-South Pride will host the annual conference of Prides of the Southeast (POSE) at the Memphis Hilton (formerly Adam's Mark Hotel) from Fri., Feb. 14, through Sun., Feb. 16. Approximately 150 members of Pride leadership will be in attendance for idea sharing and workshops.

A series of eight workshops will be held during the Saturday sessions on subjects ranging from "Preserving the Legacy of Pride" and fundraising to the role of Christianity in gender and sexual identification; media; and volunteer recruitment.

Among the presenters are:

- Vincent Astor, unofficial historian of the Memphis GLBT community
- Phyllis Tickle, founder of the Religion Department of *Publishers Weekly* and an authority on religion in America

• Mary Schuener of Arnoult & Associates, Inc. and an authority on non-profit fundraising

• Russell Olivera, founder and editor-in-chief of QBliss, an internet site devoted to gay issues

• Darie L.K. Wolfson, an authority on volunteer recruitment and maintenance.

In addition, the Ryan Parker/Mark Jones film *Eli Parker's Getting Married?* will be screened for the participants.

For more information on the conference, go to www.midsouthpride.org.

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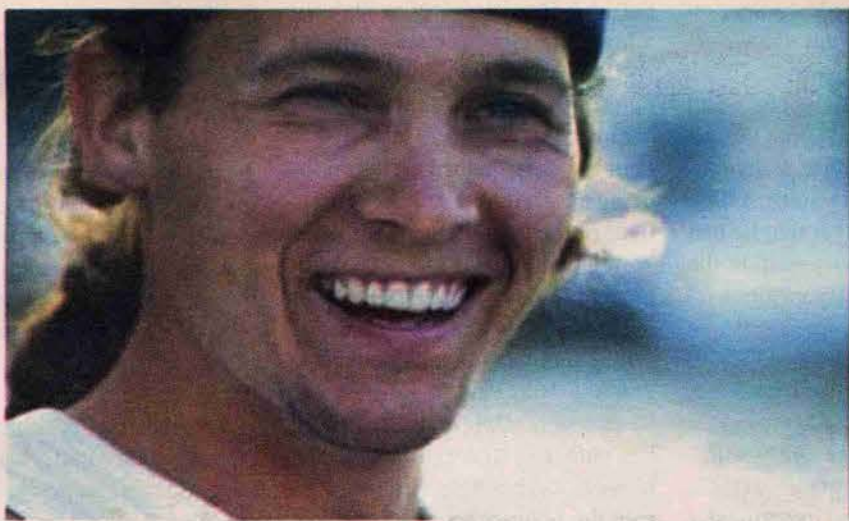
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Oregon Domestic Partnership Law Halted

A federal judge on Dec. 28 placed on hold a state domestic partnership law that was set to take effect Jan. 1, pending a February hearing. The law would give some spousal rights to same-sex couples.

Opponents asked U.S. District Judge Michael W. Mosman to intercede after the Oregon secretary of state's office ruled in October that they had failed to collect enough valid signatures on a referendum to block the law.

The Oregon measure covers benefits related to inheritance rights,

child-rearing and custody, joint state tax filings, joint health, auto and homeowners insurance policies, visitation rights at hospitals and others. It does not affect federal benefits for married couples, including Social Security and joint filing of federal tax returns.

New Jersey Gains Strongest Transgender Protections

By a 65 to 10 vote, the New Jersey Assembly has approved sweeping legislation to strengthen New Jersey's hate crimes and anti-school bullying laws. On Jan. 10, the New Jersey Senate approved the bill 35 to 0.

The bill, conceived by Garden State Equality with the New Jersey Anti-Defamation League and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, adds "gender identity or

expression" to the state's existing hate crimes law and strengthens the hate crimes law in several other ways.

N.H. Civil Union Count Nears 100

Nearly 100 same-sex couples have been joined in civil unions since they became legal in New Hampshire on New Year's Day.

William Bolton, director of the state Vital Records Administration, said 183 civil union licenses have been issued since Dec. 10, when the paperwork became available; most — 171 — were issued to New Hampshire residents. The licenses are valid for 90 days. Officials know of 95 ceremonies that have taken place and 63 happened on Jan. 1, the day the civil unions law went into effect.

"I think mostly people are saying, 'Let's take the legal protections we can right now and keep up the fight,'" said Mo Baxley, a state lawmaker and executive director of the New Hampshire Freedom to Marry Coalition, which supports full marriage for gay people.

The largest of those Jan. 1 ceremonies took place just after midnight on the Statehouse steps, when dozens of couples celebrated the new law in a mass ceremony in front of the building where it was passed and signed into law in 2007.

But the overall number of civil unions is small compared to marriages. Since Dec. 10, 614 marriage licenses have been issued to couples and at least 426 ceremonies have taken place, Bolton said.

The New Hampshire law gives

couples in civil unions the same rights and responsibilities of married couples in all aspects but name, but that promise, though largely untested, has clear limits.

Gay couples taking advantage of the law acquire substantial new state protections ranging from important health benefits to the ability to inherit without a will. But they will be treated legally as two unmarried adults in all but New Jersey, Vermont, Connecticut and California which recognize civil unions or domestic partnerships for gay couples.

Gay couples united in New Hampshire — or any other state — won't qualify for federal Social Security or veterans survivor benefits or be able to sponsor a foreign national to immigrate as their spouse.

Baxley said she already has heard from state residents who have been surprised to learn that civil unions don't provide all the benefits of heterosexual marriage.

"People are starting to understand exactly what this law means and what it doesn't mean," she said.

New Hampshire is the fourth state in the country to adopt civil unions after Vermont, Connecticut and New Jersey. Massachusetts is the only state that allows marriage.

Third of Homeless Young New Yorkers Gay

A new study says there are at least 3,800 people under the age of 25 living on the streets of New York and that almost 30 percent are gay, lesbian or bisexual.

The study, by the Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services, has been turned over to City Council, which paid for it.

Nearly half of all homeless young people were black, about 25 percent were latino the study said. Those numbers would be propor-

tionate to black and latino populations in New York.

But the high number of gays on the streets is about three times the estimated percentage of New York's LGBT community.

The survey found that while many homeless youth went to city shelters


42 percent slept on the streets, subways or in empty buildings.

Some, the study said, turned to prostitution trying to find a "trick" to spend the night with.


The study was based on surveys of 1,000 young people taken last summer.

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Analingus: The Curious Lovers' Guide to Oral-Anal Contact

Not everybody feels comfortable with the thought of kissing or licking their lover's anus or with having it done to them. But the fact is, many lovers are curious about oral-anal contact — known as **analingus** and casually called "rimming" — and often feel surprised by their interest, but when they try it, some become enthusiastic about it.

By AJ aka Dutty
(dubbyboy15@yahoo.com)

Many lovers have an accidental introduction to analingus during cunnilingus, since the bottom of the vaginal entrance is quite close to the anus. Sometimes a little lick meant for the lower vagina slips further south than intended, and the recipient experiences unexpected delight — and sometimes a surprisingly powerful urge to explore analingus further.

For other lovers, interest in rimming develops from anal play. The most popular anal activities are sphincter massage and fingering, and many people also enjoy butt plugs and penis-anus intercourse. But as people explore other forms of anal eroticism, many warm up to the idea of analingus.

Another Way to Play

There is absolutely nothing wrong with or abnormal about rimming. If you feel tempted to condemn it, remember that, not too long ago, oral sex was considered a disgusting perversion and was outlawed in many states. Now oral sex is so widely accepted that about three-quarters of Americans say they have performed it on a lover and had it performed on them. In fact, many couples don't make love without it.

Rimming may not ever become as popular as oral sex, but in recent years Americans have become somewhat more sexually experimental. In fact, surveys suggest that around 15 percent of American adults — more than 20 million people — have experienced some form of anal sex play. There are no statistics specifically on rimming, but as people become more comfortable with sexual experimentation in general, and anal play in particular, it should come as no surprise that many heterosexuals and homosexuals alike are expressing curiosity about analingus.

Why Analingus Feels Erotic

The anus and surrounding tissue are richly endowed with nerves that are highly sensitive to gentle, playful, loving touch. The same is true for the lips and tongue, and when you put these areas together, the combination can be powerfully erotic.

Another reason anal stimulation feels erotic is the pelvic floor muscles, which lie beneath the surface of the anal area. These muscles

play an important role in sex and are the ones that contract during orgasm. Using a sex toy, finger or tongue to massage or insert into the anus stimulates the pelvic floor muscles and heightens overall erotic sensations.

Finally, sex draws a good deal of its emotional power from lovers' wholehearted acceptance of each other. Analingus involves acceptance of an area that's often not accepted — in fact, one that's usually rejected. Analingus becomes a way for the giver to say: "I love all of you. No part of your wonderful body turns me off." And it's a way for the receiver to say: "I'm totally yours. No part of me is off limits to you." This level of mutual acceptance can be a powerful turn-on.

Raising The Issue

If you're interested in rimming, raise the issue before you dive in. Some couples prefer to discuss sexual experimentation in non-sexual settings. Others like to discuss experimentation while making love. Raise the issue in whatever way feels the most comfortable to you in your relationship.

If you and your lover have open and frank sexual communication, you might simply announce that you'd like to try analingus. On the other hand, if you feel reluctant to admit your interest — the case for many — you might raise the issue indirectly, perhaps by mentioning offhandedly that you read something about it on MyPleasure.com and asking what your lover thinks of it.

If your honey grimaces, chances are that analingus won't become part of your intimate repertoire. Never pressure a lover to try rimming if he or she doesn't want to. But if your lover shows any interest, even if it's couched in skepticism and concern about hygiene, you may detect enough of an opening to pursue the issue, allay your lover's concerns and perhaps introduce it into your lovemaking.

If you decide to experiment with analingus, you also need to discuss who's interested in which role. Some people are interested in only one side of a rimming interaction; others feel equally comfortable in both roles. Before you begin, be sure you're clear on who does what.

The Big Fear: Fecal Contact

Because the anus is intimately involved in defecation, many

people assume that oral-anal contact must involve contact with feces. This is possible. Even with good wiping, traces of fecal material may cling to the anus and the skin around it.

However, careful personal hygiene minimizes exposure. San Francisco sex therapist Jack Morin, Ph.D., author of the now-classic *Anal Pleasure & Health*, insists that the anus, anal canal and rectum usually contain surprisingly little stool. Most fecal material is stored above the rectum in the descending colon. When stool moves into the rectum, you feel "the urge," and it then passes out of the body fairly quickly. Most of the time, when you feel no urge to defecate, there are only trace amounts of stool in the rectum, anal canal and anus — traces that can easily be washed out.

The digestive tract might also contain other harmful micro-organisms that can be spread during oral-anal contact. Among them:

- **Other bacteria.** Two significant germs are *Shigella* and *Salmonella*, which cause food poisoning. These germs can cause acute and often vicious diarrhea, and it's possible for someone with mild symptoms to transmit the infection to someone else who develops severe symptoms.

- **Intestinal parasites, notably *Giardia lamblia*, and amoebas, both of which cause diarrhea.**

- **Viruses, notably HIV (the AIDS virus) and the one that causes hepatitis A.** HIV typically spreads through blood-to-blood contact. Anal tissue bleeds easily, particularly in the estimated one-third of American adults who have hemorrhoids. (These varicose veins of the anal canal sometimes cause pain, but frequently do not, so affected individuals may not know they have them.) If HIV-contaminated blood enters the mouth of a someone who has a minor injury — bleeding gums, for example — the infection might be transmitted.

Fun Without Fear

Because infections such as HIV can be transmitted during analingus, it's crucial that lovers who play this way take prudent precautions:

- **Wash thoroughly.** Before any sexual encounter involving oral-anal play, the area around and inside the anus should be carefully washed with soap and water.

- **Consider showering together.** Washing is good, but showering together is even better. Not only is it sensual foreplay, but you can both make sure everything is clean and ready to go.

- **Consider an enema.** For an extra margin of hygiene safety, the recipient might want to try an enema before washing. Enemas rinse the rectum and anal canal, removing most traces of fecal material. They're easy to use, especially the disposable enemas available over the counter from pharmacies. Simply insert the flexible nozzle into the anus while on your hands and knees and gently squeeze the bottle, pushing the fluid into the rectum. After a few minutes, sit on the toilet and allow the fluid to drain out. The bottle can be refilled with warm water and reused.

- **Dam it.** Dental dams are thick sheets of latex rubber that work like a condom, acting as a physical barrier between the anus and the mouth. They may feel awkward to use at first, but, like condoms, they can be incorporated into analingus easily with a little practice and a sense of humor. Dental dams are available at most pharmacies, or you can simply buy unlubricated condoms or latex gloves and cut them into flat sheets. In a pinch, you can also use plastic food wrap. To heighten pleasure, massage a little sexual lubricant into your lover's anus before applying the dam.

- **Rinse after.** After analingus without a dam, be sure to rinse your mouth with an antiseptic mouthwash or, at the very least, water.

In truly monogamous couples, where both people are confident that neither has hepatitis, HIV or intestinal parasites, the only real risk of analingus is contact with digestive bacteria — and enemas and careful washing virtually eliminates this. According to Dr. Morin, for healthy, monogamous couples who practice careful anal hygiene, the risk of analingus causing infection or illness is "extremely low." Consider your situation carefully. Discuss it. Then decide for yourselves the appropriate level of precautions you want to take.

Analingus

Techniques and Tips

Certain positions allow oral-anal contact with a minimum of contortions:

- **Knees and elbows.** The person receiving pleasure assumes the position typically used for rear-entry (doggie-style) intercourse, while his or her lover kneels or squats behind. Either partner may gently spread the cheeks to expose the anus.

- **Standing bent over.** The person on the receiving end stands and bends at the waist, and his or her partner kneels, sits or squats behind.

- **Lying supine.** The person being licked lies on his or her back, legs bent, knees drawn up to the chest or apart, while the other lover squats or lies on his or her stomach. It often helps in this position to place a pillow under the recipient's hips, which raises the anus and allows for easier access.

- **Sixty-nine.** Compared with mutual oral-genital contact, mutual analingus requires somewhat more physical flexibility, but many people enjoy this position.

Once you're both in position for analingus, here are some tips on technique:

- **Take it slow.** Some recipients enjoy having their partner plunge into analingus. But unless they specifically request it, you should approach this highly sensitive area slowly. Massage, kiss and lick the person's lower back, thighs, hips and buttocks as you slowly work your way towards his or her anus. A slow approach builds anticipation for what's about to happen and often heightens the eroticism of analingus.

- **Use your lips.** Kiss your lover's anus and the area around it.

- **Use the flat of your tongue.** Press it against your partner's anus.

- **Use the tip of your tongue.** Wiggle it around the anus, slip it inside and move it in and out or wiggle it around in circles.

From Rimming to Other Forms of Anal Play

As mentioned earlier, some lovers discover analingus while involved in other forms of anal play. For others, analingus might be their introduction to anal eroticism. If analingus makes you curious about other aspects of anal sex, see MyPleasure's (www.mylpleasure.com) article, "Introducing Anal Sex," as well as the *Introducing Anal Sex Anal Collection* of sex toys specifically designed to enhance backdoor fun.

Whatever you and your lover ultimately decide about analingus, discussing it can deepen the intimacy you share. You will learn more about yourself and each other. You will become clearer about what you're willing and unwilling to try. In the end, as it were, these discussions will help you feel closer to one another and better able to experience whatever sexual pleasure you both enjoy.

"Drag is when a man wears everything a lesbian won't."
—Author Unknown

10 Things Gay Men Should Talk About with Their Doctors

Here is a list of ten key things that gay men should discuss with their doctors.

Vincent M. B. Silenzio, MD, MPH
Board of Directors, Gay and Lesbian
Medical Association

1. HIV/AIDS, Safe Sex: That men who have sex with men are at an increased risk of HIV infection is well known, but the effectiveness of safe sex in reducing the rate of HIV infection is one of the gay community's great success stories. However, the last few years have seen the return of many unsafe sex practices. While effective HIV treatments may be on the horizon, there is no substitute for preventing infection. Safe sex is proven to reduce the risk of receiving or transmitting HIV. All health care professionals should be aware of how to counsel and support maintenance of safe sex practices.

2. Substance Use: Gay men use substances at a higher rate than the general population, and not just in larger communities such as New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. These include a number of substances ranging from amyl nitrate ("poppers") to marijuana, Ecstasy and amphetamines. The long-term effects of many of these substances are unknown; however current wisdom suggests potentially serious consequences as we age.

3. Depression/Anxiety: Depression and anxiety appear to affect gay men at a higher rate than in the general population. The likelihood of depression or anxiety may be greater, and the problem may be more severe for those men who remain in the closet or who do not have adequate social supports. Adolescents and young adults may be at particularly high risk of suicide because of these concerns. Culturally sensitive mental health services targeted specifically at gay men may be more effective in the prevention, early detection, and treatment of these conditions.

4. Hepatitis Immunization: Men who have sex with men are at an increased risk of sexually transmitted infection with the viruses that cause the serious condition of the liver known as hepatitis. These infections can be potentially fatal, and can lead to very serious long-term issues such as cirrhosis and liver cancer. Fortunately, immunizations are available to prevent two of the three most serious viruses. Universal immunization for Hepatitis A Virus and Hepatitis B Virus is recommended for all men who have sex with men. Safe sex is effective at reducing the risk of viral hepatitis, and is currently the only means of prevention for the very serious Hepatitis C Virus.

5. STDs: Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) occur in sexually active gay men at a high rate. This includes STD infections for which effective treatment is available (syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, pubic lice, and others), and for which no cure is available (HIV; Hepatitis A, B, or C virus; Human Papilloma Virus; etc.). There is absolutely no doubt that safe sex reduces the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, and prevention of these infections through safe sex is key.

6. Prostate, Testicular, and Colon Cancer: Gay men may be at risk for death by prostate, testicular or colon cancer.

Screening for these cancers occurs at different times across the life cycle, and access to screening services may be negatively impacted because of issues and challenges in receiving culturally sensitive care for gay men. All gay men should undergo these screenings routinely as recommended for the general population.

7. Alcohol: Although more recent studies have improved our understanding of alcohol use in the gay community, it is still thought that gay men have higher rates of alcohol dependence and abuse than straight men. One drink daily may not adversely affect health, however alcohol-related illnesses can occur with low levels of consumption. Culturally sensitive services targeted to gay men are important in successful prevention and treatment programs.

8. Tobacco: Recent studies seem to support the notion that gay men use tobacco at much higher rates than straight men, reaching nearly 50 percent in several studies. Tobacco-related health problems include lung disease and lung cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure and a whole host of other serious problems. All gay men should be screened for and offered culturally sensitive prevention and cessation programs for tobacco use.

9. Fitness (Diet and Exercise): Problems with body image are more common among gay men than their straight counterparts, and gay men are much more likely to experience an eating disorder such as bulimia or anorexia nervosa. While regular exercise is very good for cardiovascular health and in other areas, too much of a good thing can be harmful. The use of substances such as anabolic steroids and certain supplements can adversely affect health. At the opposite end of the spectrum, overweight and obesity are problems that also affect a large subset of the gay community. This can cause a number of health problems, including diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

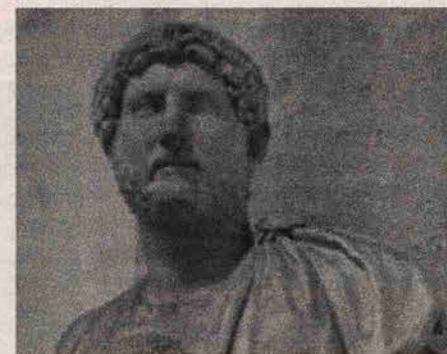
10. Anal Papilloma: Of all the sexually transmitted infections gay men are at risk for, human papilloma virus—which cause anal and genital warts—is often thought to be little more than an unsightly inconvenience. However, these infections may play a role in the increased rates of anal cancers in gay men. Some health professionals now recommend routine screening with anal Pap Smears, similar to the test done for women to detect early cancers. Safe sex should be emphasized. Treatments for HPV do exist, but recurrences of the warts are very common, and the rate at which the infection can be spread between partners is very high.

GLMA, the recognized leader in LGBT health, represents the interests of thousands of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender physicians, medical students, and other health professionals as well as millions of LGBT patients throughout North America. The largest organization of its kind, GLMA was founded in 1981 to combat homophobia in medicine and promote quality health care for all LGBT people.

Hadrian the Gay Emperor

The bust is classically Roman, the face imperious. But this is no ordinary emperor.

As a major new exhibition at the British Museum makes clear, Publius Aelius Traianus Hadrianus was not only a peacemaker who pulled his soldiers out of modern-day Iraq. He was also the first leader of Rome to make it clear that he was gay.



A bust of Roman Emperor Hadrian

"Hadrian: Empire and Conflict" will see the bust make pilgrimages to both ends of Hadrian's Wall, the first time it has left the British Museum since being found in the Thames 200 years ago. But it is the singular life-story of the gay emperor that is likely to capture the interest of most visitors.

After being made emperor AD117, he inherited a Roman Empire in its prime, which had thrived on a policy of endless expansion and conquest.

His first move, within hours of coronation, was to withdraw his troops from Mesopotamia, now Iraq, and fortify the empire's boundaries by building his eponymous wall in northern England and others in the Danube and the Rhine valleys, ushering in a new era of peace. The reign that followed can be traced through 200 ancient treasures, many of which have

never been display in Britain.

Several of the artefacts relate to his male consort, Antinous, who accompanied him on his travels around the empire. These items include a poem written on papyrus, featuring the two men hunting together, and new finds that include memorials to the dead lover at Hadrian's villa in Tivoli.

Although it was not uncommon for his predecessors to have taken gay lovers alongside a female spouse, Hadrian was unique in making his love "official" in a way that no other emperor had before him.



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Tom Cruise Biography Refutes Gay Rumors

A controversial new Tom Cruise biography alleges the actor was an insatiable womanizer during high school.

The actor has been hounded throughout his career by rumors he is gay — but Andrew Morton's unauthorized book suggests he has pursued women relentlessly all through his life, and one former girlfriend claims he was homophobic.

Morton interviewed Cruise's actress-ex Melissa Gilbert, who said, "I can honestly say he's a very sexual person. There was a lot of making out on the couch in my mom's living room." The pair dated when he was 19, until he ditched her for Heather Locklear.

On the gay rumors, one date who accompanied Cruise to a production of *La Cage Aux Folles*, tells Morton, "Men dressed as women, he couldn't handle it. We had to



Tom Cruise

leave before the intermission. It really bothered him. He was definitely homophobic."

Cruise's lawyer Bert Fields has described the contents of *Tom Cruise: An Unauthorized Biography* as "lies."

Arthritic, Sporty, Gay? Your Finger Ratio Gives You Away

Your fingers can point to many things — and not just physically.

Scientists have discovered that people whose index finger is shorter than their ring finger run an elevated risk of getting osteoarthritis. The finding strengthens the curious biological importance that this index finger/ring finger ratio (known as 2D:4D) has on our lives. It has previously been associated with hormone levels, athletic prowess and sexual orientation.

Nottingham University researchers compared finger lengths of 2,000 osteoarthritis sufferers with those of 1,100 healthy individuals. Those with relatively long ring fingers — the pattern usually seen in men — were twice as likely to be in the osteoarthritis group. Women with this "male" finger ratio were particularly likely to have bad knees.

The researchers say that they are unsure why such an association exists, but it could be due to hormonal influences in the womb. Generally, a longer ring finger is thought to indicate higher exposure to prena-

tal testosterone. In women, the index finger is either similar in length or slightly longer than the ring finger.

This has led to various studies on finger ratios in sports people. A 2006 paper in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* suggested that gifted sportswomen show a "male" 2D:4D. A separate study, from the University of Central Lancashire, indicated a fascinating correlation between finger ratios and footballing success in men. Professional footballers tend to exhibit longer ring fingers than the non-footballing population, while the ratio is even more pronounced among international players.

Rather more controversially, the ratio has also been linked to sexual orientation. Lesbians are more likely to sport a "male" ratio than straight women, but gay men are more like to have an even 2D:4D ratio which supports the idea that sexual orientation is shaped by hormonal exposure in the womb.

"Gay people, well, gay people are EVIL, evil right down to their cold black hearts which pump not blood like yours or mine, but rather a thick, vomitous oil that oozes through their rotten veins and clots in their pea-sized brains which becomes the cause of their Nazi-esque patterns of violent behavior. Do you understand?"

— Trey Parker and Matt Stone
(From *South Park*, spoken by Mr Garrison)

Obituaries

Pioneer, Historian and 'Godfather of Disco'

Mel Cheren, who died Dec. 7 at 74, was a founder of West End Records, a spearhead of disco from the mid-1970s.

As a producer for another label, Scepter Records, Cheren was credited by *Billboard* magazine with inventing the 12-inch single and the purely instrumental b-side, which allowed a DJ to extend a dance song infinitely.

He also backed a memorable nightclub, the Paradise Garage, where disco dreams played out in the fabulous late 1970s and early 1980s. A 2006 documentary about Cheren's role in the music's early days was titled, *The Godfather of Disco*.

All too notoriously, the predominantly gay social scene of early disco burned out in the face of the AIDS epidemic. Cheren became a leader in that cause as well, holding the first fund-raisers and donating the first office space to the Gay Men's Health Crisis in his Chelsea brownstone, a renovated SRO. After GMHC outgrew those quarters, Cheren converted the brownstone into a gay-oriented bed-and-breakfast, the Colonial House Inn.

Allan Bérubé, pioneering gay historian, died Dec. 11 from complications related to stomach ulcers. He was 61. Bérubé wrote the award-winning book *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II*.

His death was due to sudden complications following the discovery of two stomach ulcers, according to his close friend Jonathan Ned Katz, a fellow gay historian.

Bérubé was, for decades, an independent historian and community activist. He first came to progressive political activism in opposition to the Vietnam war, working with the American Friends Service Committee in Boston in the late 1960s, after dropping out of the University of Chicago. After coming out in 1969, he joined a "gay liberation collective household," and later moved to San Francisco to join a gay commune for craftspeople. He was one of the founders of the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay History Project in 1978. His slide shows about women who dressed and passed as men — and married other women — were welcomed by enthusiastic audiences around the country.

Kenneth H. Burns, an early leader of the Mattachine Society, one of the country's first gay rights organizations, died Dec. 16 in Burbank, Calif. He was 81.

The cause was lung failure, according to a friend, Dale Olson.

Burns was a founding member of the Mattachine Society, which was begun in Los Angeles in 1950 by activist Harry Hay and others.

In 1953, when McCarthyism was strengthening its grip on the national consciousness, Hay and other Mattachine leaders with communist ties were ousted and Burns assumed a prominent role in the organization.

The society moved in a more conservative direction during Burns' tenure as Mattachine president in the mid- to late 1950s. Along with other Mattachine leaders, including Harold Call and Don Lucas, he urged members to temper their public image and assimilate into society.

"We must blame ourselves for much of our plight," Burns said during this period. "When will homosexuals ever realize that social reform, in order to be effective, must be preceded by personal reform?"

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.mary'smemphis.com

Nocturnal: 1588 Madison Ave., ☎ 726-1909

Metro Memphis: 1349 Autumn, ☎ 274-8010.

One More: 2117 Peabody, ☎ 278-MORE

Paragon Lounge: 2865 Walnut Grove Rd., ☎ 320-0026

The Pumping Station: 1382 Poplar, ☎ 272-

7600.

The Jungle: 1474 Madison, ☎ 278-0521

CARDS AND GIFTS

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

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Alliance: Leather/levi club · Box 42174, Memphis 38174.

BGALA (Students for Bisexual, Gay & Lesbian Awareness): ☎ 729-3915.

Bluff City Sports Association: Box 41803, Memphis 38174-1803, ☎ 682-9928.

Brothers & Sisters Bowling League: ☎ 465-4371 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.midsouth-pride.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.

Tsarus: Leather-Levi club · Box 41082, Memphis 38174-1082.

U of M Students for Bisexual, Gay & Lesbian Awareness (BGALA): BGALA c/o Office of Greek Affairs Box 100, U of M 38152, ☎ 278-5825 email: bgala@cc.memphis.edu.

Univ. of Miss. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Assoc.: GLBA, PO Box 3541, Univ., MS 38677, ☎ 662-234-1258 email: glba@olemiss.edu, website: www.olemiss.edu/orgs/glba.

WAC (Woman's Action Coalition): PO Box 1203, 3566 Walker, Memphis 38111 ☎ 678-3339.

Queer Notes

News and Commentary by Jim Maynard

Happy New Year! It's time to say goodbye to 2007 and look forward to 2008. It's looking like a mixed bag. The good news, according to my "George W. Bush Out of Office Countdown Calendar:" there are "only" 380 days left of the horrible disaster of the worst president in modern U.S. history.

2007 ended with the worst year in Iraq since Bush's illegal invasion. Despite all the claims of improvements with the recent "surge" of U.S. troops, 2007 has been the worst year yet in Iraq. With over 175,000 troops in Iraq, 894 U.S. soldiers were killed, making 2007 the deadliest year of the entire U.S. military occupation. During the surge, the number of Iraqis displaced from their homes quadrupled. By the end of 2007, the U.N. estimates that over 2.3 million Iraqis are displaced from their homes and over 2.3 million have fled the country, creating one of the worst refugee crises in the world. With growing internal divisions and political turmoil, 2008 may be even worse.

According to the *New York Times*, the situation of gays in Iraq is also worse. Religious extremism sparked by the war in Iraq has left once-comfortable gays in Iraq demonized and afraid. Gay Iraqis have become greater targets after the U.S. invasion. After the war began, about 400 people were killed for being gay and gays were forced underground, according to Iraqi gay rights groups. The growing influence of Iran, where homosexuality is punishable by death, has also alarmed Iraqi gays and lesbians.

Things were a little better for gays and lesbians in the United States. New Hampshire began the year by extending most of the legal rights of marriage to gay couples with a new civil union law. The law was condemned by Republican presidential candidates, but praised by Democrats.

On the negative side, Oregon's domestic partnership law was halted by U.S. District Judge Michael W. Mosman, another anti-gay Bush appointee, underscoring the importance of the presidential election in determining the future of LGBT civil rights. Bush has appointed 300 federal judges, giving Republican appointees a majority, including a 60 percent-to-40 percent advantage on influential appeals courts.

These Bush appointees on the federal courts could come in handy for George W. Bush as Congress moves forward with hearings on the crimes of the Bush Administration. House and Senate judiciary

committees have already approved contempt of Congress charges against several Bush officials and there is a growing movement to begin impeachment hearings against Dick Cheney.

In addition to the many crimes of George W. Bush leading up to the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq (misleading Congress, falsifying intelligence reports, etc.), there is now a growing scandal surrounding the illegal destruction of CIA torture tapes which would finger George W. Bush as a war criminal!

All eyes are now on the presidential election in 2008 and the Democratic and Republican primaries. Barack Obama and Mike Huckabee won the Iowa caucuses. Obama defeated Hillary Clinton with over 37 percent of the vote there. John Edwards came in second, leaving Hillary Clinton in third place. In New Hampshire, Hillary Clinton won first place, surprising most pollsters. Obama's spine-tingling speeches sound a lot like MLK and Robert Kennedy, but I'm not sure he has "the stuff" to be president yet. I would like to see an Edwards/Obama ticket, but it's looking more like a Clinton/Obama ticket.

I was a Kucinich supporter, but I am now supporting John Edwards. While Dennis Kucinich deserves the votes of progressives and gays for sponsoring a single-payer health care bill and articles of impeachment against Dick Cheney, and standing up for marriage equality, he has no chance of winning. John Edwards is my second choice because of his populist, anti-corporate campaign to challenge the corporatist wing of the Democratic Party. Edwards is the only candidate to not only support LGBT rights, but to also highlight the problems of growing poverty and economic inequality in the U.S.

Prior to Iowa, polls showed that Edwards had the best chance of beating all the GOP candidates, and Hillary Clinton had the worst chance. Now, Obama may be the best Democratic candidate to beat the GOP. I would be happy with Obama or Edwards, but I'm afraid Hillary could lose the general election. Edwards seems to be the only Democratic candidate who could win swing states like Ohio and Florida, but he's being ignored by

the mainstream media and Democratic voters, as is Dennis Kucinich. Wonder why the candidates who are the most progressive and truthful get ignored?

On the Republican side, what a mess! I haven't seen a more disturbing group of candidates in my lifetime. Several northeastern newspapers have published *non-endorsements* of "multiple-Mitt" Romney. Everyone realizes now that he is a fake. (Romney did win the endorsement of homophobic bigot Rev. Lou Sheldon!) Former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, an anti-gay conservative Baptist preacher, actually now seems like the most "moderate" of the GOP candidates!

Huckabee has refused to repudiate his past comments about homosexuality being an "aberrant, unnatural and sinful lifestyle," his call for the quarantine of AIDS victims in 1992, or his 1998 speech to the Southern Baptist Convention in which he said, "I hope we answer the alarm clock and take this country back for Christ." He is a very smooth politician who should not be underestimated. He has balanced his extreme conservative views on social issues with a more populist message of helping the poor and opposing corporate greed. And he has some support in the African-American community, winning over 40 percent of the black vote in Arkansas. While he has the support of the Christian Right, Huckabee scares the corporate wing of the GOP because he cares too much about the poor and non-whites, including immigrants.

While Giuliani and Romney are sinking, I'm predicting that John McCain will make a comeback and win the GOP nomination. The big question is what will gay Republicans do? After being ignored and having their donations returned by their past Republican candidates, which candidate will the Log Cabin Republicans endorse in 2008? They can't endorse Mike Huckabee or Mitt Romney, both of whom are making their opposition to gay rights a centerpiece of their campaigns. Even Rudy Giuliani, their last best hope, has reversed his past support of civil unions and accuses gays of engaging in "sinful acts." (I can't think of anything more ironic than having an adulterer like Giuliani condemn homosexuality as sinful.)

John McCain, who the Log Cabin Republicans supported in 2000, is also opposed to LGBT equality and even supports the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" anti-gay policy. While he seems more "moderate" than other GOP

candidates on some issues, he is very conservative on most social issues. He opposes abortion rights and marriage equality, as well as civil unions. He is also one of the strongest supporters of Bush's illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq, and has suggested U.S. troops should stay in Iraq forever!

That leaves Ron Paul, the Libertarian Republican candidate who opposes the Iraq war and abortion, but indirectly supports marriage equality because he thinks government should not be involved in marriage at all. However, while Ron Paul is taking a heroic stand against Bush's invasion and occupation of Iraq, he is too extreme even for the Republicans in his criticisms of U.S. "imperialism" and desire to do away with all of the popular New Deal programs, including Social Security.

Journalists have dug up some of Ron Paul's old newsletters, *Ron Paul's Freedom Report*, which, according to the *New Republic*, contains, "decades worth of obsession with conspiracies; sympathy for the right-wing militia movement, and bigotry against blacks, Jews and gays." And Ron Paul, a "libertarian" opposes all civil rights laws, claiming that government should not pass laws to combat bigotry!

In 2000 and 2004, gay Republicans overwhelmingly supported George W. Bush. Being about 25 percent of the gay vote, they gave Bush over a million votes which helped defeat Al Gore and John Kerry, both strong supporters of gay rights. They helped elect not only the most anti-gay candidate, but also the worst president in modern history. Did they learn from their mistakes?

My advice to the Log Cabin Republican is to support the most moderate GOP candidate, Rudy Giuliani, and try to defeat Mike Huckabee and Mitt Romney. If ei-

ther of them wins the GOP nomination there will be an all out civil war in the GOP. As much as I detest the Republican Party and would welcome its political death, it would be a disaster for all of us if the Christo-fascists win complete control over the party.

Even if a moderate candidate like Rudy Giuliani wins the GOP nomination, it would still be a disaster for LGBT people if he wins the general election. Giuliani is promising the Christian Right that he will appoint more anti-gay conservative federal judges like Scalia and Thomas. We simply cannot afford another Republican in the White House. Given my history with gay Republicans, it is up to the rest of you to try to persuade them, your friends and family, to do the right thing in 2008 and vote for the Democratic candidate.

The anti-gay American Family Association (Tupelo, Miss.) has a new DVD, *They're Coming to Your Town* which shows "how a small group of homosexual activists took over the city council in Eureka Springs, Ark., and began imposing their homosexual agenda on that community."

According to the AFA website, the DVD "shows how, using deceitfulness and lies, homosexuals maneuvered themselves into positions of power and then used those positions to promote their agenda." I wonder if the homos in Eureka Springs could do this, why can't we do it in Memphis?

Looking into my crystal ball for 2008, I predict a severe recession is coming (some say it is already here!), and an African-American or a woman will be our next President. Here's to 2008 and the final end of the Bush/Cheney nightmare!

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

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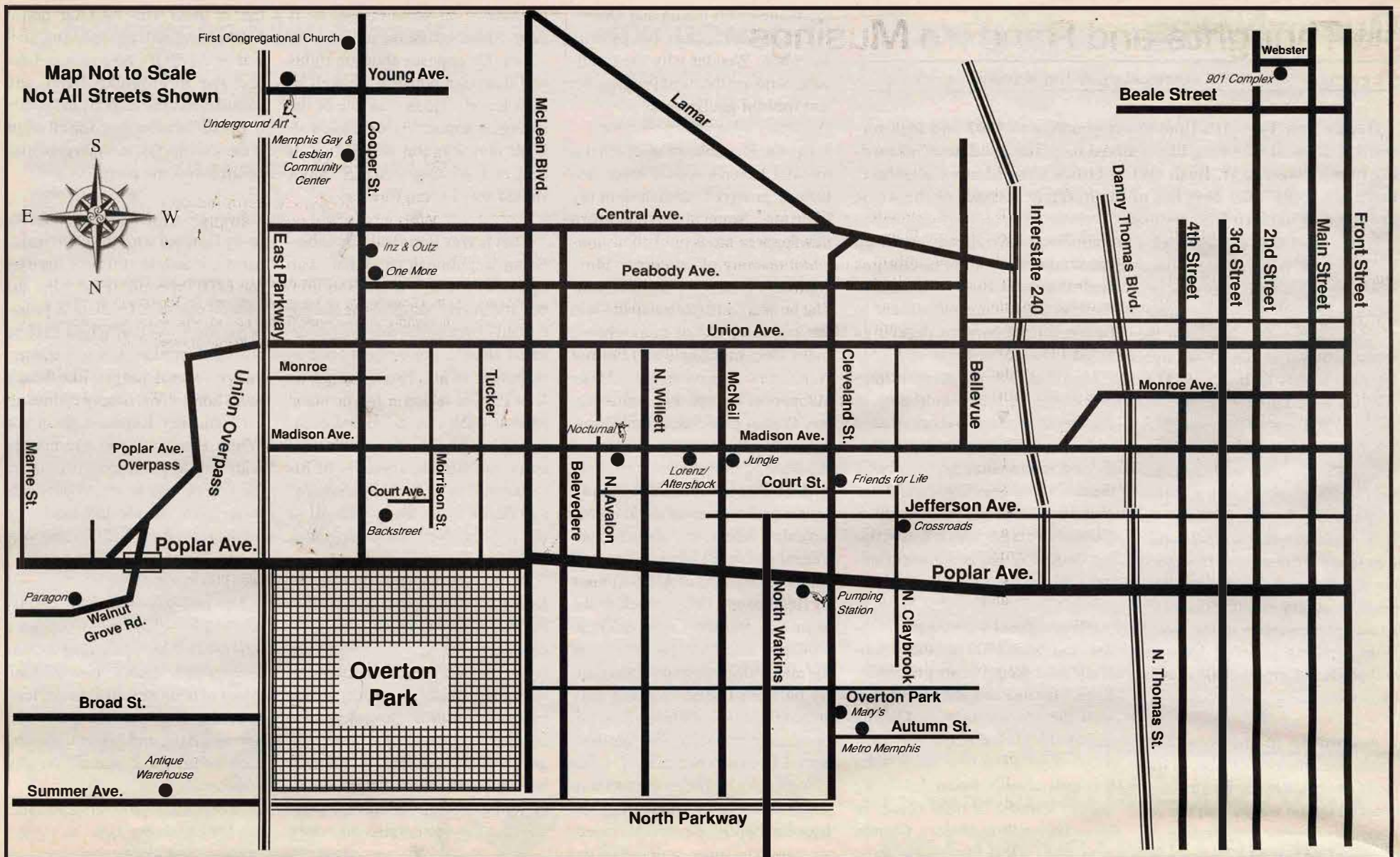
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Jan 20	Jan 21	Jan 22	Jan 23	Jan 24	Jan 25	Jan 26
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feast For Friends, 6:30pm, St. John's Methodist Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lavender University, "Then and Now Memphis Heritage," 7:00pm MGLCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Womyn's Potluck, 6pm, MGLCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GLBT History Documentary Series, 6:30pm, MGLCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q-Cafe: 7pm, MGLCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennessee Equality Project, "Lobbying 101" training, 1pm, MGLCC
Jan 27	Jan 28	Jan 29	Jan 30	Jan 31	Feb 1	Feb 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stonewall Democrats, 2pm, MGLCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perpetual Transition, 7:30pm, MGLCC 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q-Cafe: 7pm, MGLCC 	
Feb 3	Feb 4	Feb 5	Feb 6	Feb 7	Feb 8	Feb 9
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feast For Friends, 6:30pm, St. John's Methodist Church 	<p style="text-align: center;">MARDI GRAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennessee Presidential Primary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men's Potluck, 6pm, MGLCC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q-Cafe, 7pm, MGLCC • Gaze Ad Reservation Deadline for Mid-February edition 	
Feb 10	Feb 11	Feb 12	Feb 13	Feb 14	Feb 15	Feb 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MGLCC Board Meeting, 1pm, MGLCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perpetual Transition, 7:30pm, MGLCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-February Gaze Production Deadline 		<p style="text-align: center;">VALENTINE'S DAY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q-Cafe, 7pm, MGLCC • Prides of the Southeast Conference begins, Memphis Hilton • Mid-February Gaze due out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prides of the Southeast Conference Workshop sessions, 9am-4:30pm, Memphis Hilton

Idle Thoughts and Random Musings

By Allen Cook

Every once in a while I get a chill down my spine while selecting stories for this or any other newspaper I've worked on.

One of those moments came this month when I came across a story about a new staph germ that appears to have a concentration in the gay male community. (See story on page 5.)

On just seeing the headline, I flashed back to sometime in 1982 when I saw a similar story about a mysterious cancer concentrated in the gay community of San Francisco. Of course, that cancer turned out to be Kaposi's Sarcoma and the underlying cause was AIDS.

The irony? I *didn't* run that story in 1982. I am not making the same mistake twice. Caveat.

For the second time (that we know of) in its seven-year history, the TV show/contest *Survivor* has been won by a gay guy.

Openly gay flight attendant Todd Herzog became not only the second gay man to win the contest, but also the youngest.

Anyone want to bet that he is a former flight attendant now that he

has a million bucks in his bank account?

I just hope he pays his income taxes.

We reported a rumor two months ago of a new GLBT establishment going in the former Madison Flame space. We're now happy to confirm that rumor. The place is called Nocturnal and joins the list of gay and gay-friendly spaces vying for your attention. Although I haven't been in, I understand the place was gutted and rebuilt. Check it out!

Another space to check out is 901 Complex (136 Webster St.) downtown. A very inauspicious exterior hides the vastness of the interior, formerly a warehouse. In addition to the normal things a dance/drag bar has, 901 Complex has a dazzling light show and a slate of pageants that boggles the mind.

The place is owned by the same folks who owned the Allusions Entertainment Center which closed in October.

Another rumor that has surfaced (where do these things come from) is that Otherlands is being bought out by Starbucks.

The owner has no knowledge of

the sale and no one really knows where the rumor started. The point is that it is *not* happening. So don't worry.

While it may or may not include a Target store, something is happening in the area across from Pumping Station roughly at Poplar and Watkins.

The project—officially called the Midtown Memphis Planned Development—is comprised of more than 90 individual lots or parcels. The developers are proposing a mix of uses for the property, including small and large retail shops, restaurants and medical offices.

Approval also will be sought to permit apartments or condominium spaces above the retail shops. Target has reportedly expressed interest in building at the site but has not yet finalized a deal for the Midtown property.

Mardi Gras is coming early this year (Feb. 5). The irony of it falling on the day of the Tennessee Presidential Primary is not lost on this observer. One wonders if the poll workers will be throwing beads and doubloons to the voters.

Secret societies (krewes) being what they are, it's sometimes difficult to get information on them.

According to krewecentral.com, none of the three predominantly gay Memphis krewes are celebrating hard this year. The Mystic Krewe of Hathor is having a Super Bowl party on Feb. 3, but the Mystic Krewes of Memphis United and Pegasus post no plans.

Oh, well... maybe they just went to New Orleans.

Gaze

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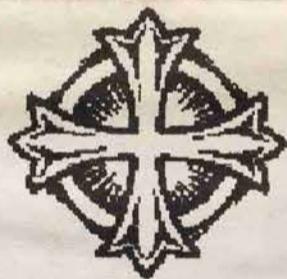
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