

UT-Martin Student Government Passes Nondiscrimination Resolution

The president of the Faculty Senate agrees with a resolution passed by the Student Government Association last month that would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the university's nondiscrimination policy.

"I think the statement is a good idea, and I think it is right to have it in print," Dr. Elaine Harris, president of the Faculty Senate said.

The Student Government Association voted Mar. 6 to recommend the university make the additions to its Equal Opportunity Statement.

The resolution—which passed in a voice vote with two dissenting votes—suggests to university administrators that the change occur within one year of the resolution's signing.

Before the vote, some legislators questioned why the change to the university's policy was necessary because federal law governs non-discrimination.

Sen. Brittany McGruder, chairwoman of the Senate Communications Committee and the bill's cosponsor, said the Civil Rights Act of 1964—after which UTM's policy is fashioned—doesn't go far enough to protect gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students.

"We represent every demographic as a public institution, not just those that we choose," McGruder said during discussion before the vote.

Sen. Maylon Price, who was one of the few who voted against the legislation, said he saw no problems with the current nondiscrimination clause and felt that the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 was sufficient for the university.

Price also said the resolution was unnecessary and immoral because the campus does not face problems with sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination.

"I don't want to stand before my maker someday and say that I voted for this legislation," Price said.

Morgan Greenhaw, president of UTM Allies, a student group that lobbies for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality issues, responded saying that there was considerable discrimination on campus, based on the evidence of defaced posters, anecdotes of students spitting on a sidewalk chalk announcement by the group and a non-university recognized "pro-straight" group called UTM Axis, a reference to the Axis powers of World War II.

"A lot of students do not know that there is a pervasive anti-gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people sentiment on this campus," Greenhaw said.

McGruder said that now that the legislation has passed, SGA President Erin Chambers will present it to UTM's administration through the vice chancellors, Faculty Senate President Elaine Harris, and the Equity and Diversity Advisory Council.

"We expect the Faculty Senate to also discuss this proposal and pass similar legislation," McGruder said. "We take this issue very seriously."

McGruder said UTM's student government was spurred to action after the student Senate at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in 2007 passed a similar resolution—which eventually led to the university adding sexual orientation to its anti-discrimination clause.

A Boy the Bullies Love to Beat Up, Repeatedly

All lank and bone, the boy stands at the corner, with his younger sister, waiting for the yellow bus that takes them to their respective schools. He is Billy Wolfe, a Fayetteville Ark. high school sophomore, struggling.

Moments earlier he left the sanctuary that is his home, passing those framed photographs of himself as a carefree child, back when he was 5. And now he is at the bus stop, wearing a baseball cap, vulnerable at 15.

A car the color of a school bus pulls up with a boy who tells his brother beside him that he's going to beat up Billy Wolfe. While one records the assault with a cellphone camera, the other walks up to the oblivious Billy and punches him hard enough to leave a fist-size welt on his forehead.

The video shows Billy staggering, then dropping his book bag to fight back, lanky arms flailing. But the screams of his sister stop things cold.

The aggressor heads to school, to show friends the video of his Billy moment, while Billy heads home, again. It's not yet 8 in the morning.

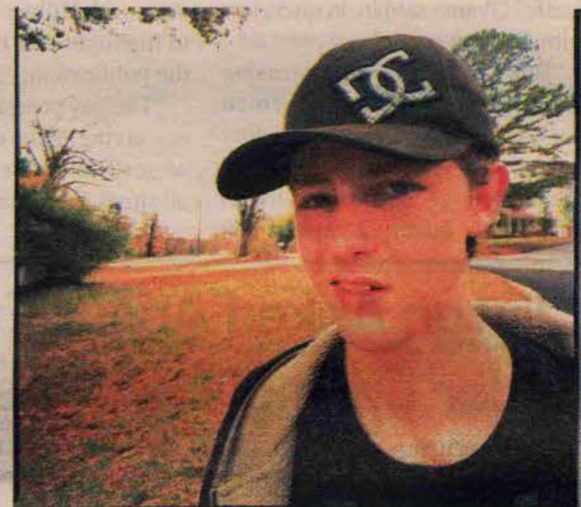
Bullying is everywhere, including here in Fayetteville, a city of 60,000 with one of the country's better school systems. A decade ago a Fayetteville student was mercilessly harassed and beaten for being gay. After a complaint was filed with the Office of Civil Rights, the district adopted procedures to promote tolerance and respect — none

of which seems to have been of much comfort to Billy Wolfe.

It remains unclear why Billy became a target at age 12; schoolyard anthropology can be so nuanced. Maybe because he was so tall, or wore glasses then, or has a learning disability that affects his reading comprehension. Or maybe some kids were just bored. Or angry.

Whatever the reason, addressing the bullying of Billy has become a second job for his parents: Curt, a senior data analyst, and Penney, the owner of an office-supply company. They have binders of school records and police reports, along with photos documenting the bruises and black eyes. They are well-known to school officials, perhaps even too well-known, but they make no apologies for being vigilant. They also reject any suggestion that they should move out of the district because of this.

The many incidents seem to blur



Billy Wolfe

together into one protracted assault. When Billy attaches a bully's name to one beating, his mother corrects him. "That was Benny, sweetie," she says. "That was in the eighth grade."

It began years ago when a boy called the house and asked Billy if he wanted to buy a certain sex toy, heh-heh. Billy told his mother, who informed the boy's mother. The next day the boy showed Billy a list with the names of 20 boys who wanted to beat Billy up.

Ms. Wolfe says she and her husband knew it was coming. She says

See Bully on page 11

Right Wing Video Warns: Gays Are Plotting to Invade City Hall

The town of Eureka Springs is turning into the "San Francisco of Arkansas," warns the American Family Association, and it can happen in your town too.

The presentation, "They're Coming to Your Town," tells the tale of an uncharacteristically diverse resort town's government infiltrated by "a handful of homosexual activists" and bent to their will through the enactment of the town's domestic partner registry on June 22, 2007.

"Watch, and learn," says the trailer, "how to fight a well-organized gay agenda to take over the cities of America, one city at a time."

Eureka Springs, most recently, has gotten an honorable mention from unlikely celebrity and Oklahoma House Rep. Sally Kern, who propped it up as an example of the

"gay agenda" that she has called a "death knell" and a larger threat than international terrorism, in addition to comparing such an "agenda" to cancer.

The domestic partner registry isn't legally recognized outside Eureka Springs due to Arkansas' Amendment 83, passed in 2004, which simply reads: "Marriage consists only of the union of one man and one woman." Amendment 83 was invoked by Rev. Philip Wilson, a vocal opponent of the registry who said that it would render the town a "homosexual mecca." Wilson submitted two sets of petition signatures, aiming to force enactment of

the registry onto a special ballot, which were declined.

"It's Eureka's nature to welcome all who choose to visit," says the "Welcome" page at Eureka Pride, which presides over three "diversity weekends" throughout the year and maintains a directory of LGBT-owned and LGBT-friendly businesses in the community. "Eureka has a very diverse population. We're Victorian in style, not in attitudes. Yes, we have a 7-story Jesus that sits atop East Mountain at the Passion Play grounds. But we're also home to many art galleries, fine dining establishments, and some of the best nightclubs in the region."

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Obama: Repeal of 'Don't Ask' Possible

Barack Obama says if elected president he will not require that his Joint Chiefs of Staff be opposed to the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that prevents gays from serving openly in the military.

The Democratic presidential front-runner favors repealing the policy, which was instituted during the Clinton administration. He said his priority for the Joint Chiefs will be that they make decisions to strengthen the military and keep the country safe, not their position on the policy.

"I would never make this a litmus test for the Joint Chiefs of Staff," Obama said in an interview with *The Advocate*.

"But I think there's increasing recognition within the Armed Forces that this is a counterproductive strategy," he said. "We're spending large sums of money to kick highly qualified gays or les-

bians out of our military, some of whom possess specialties like Arab-language capabilities that we desperately need. That doesn't make us more safe."

The interview comes after Obama was criticized by gay advocates for not speaking to the gay media. *The Philadelphia Gay News* last week ran a large blank space on its front page next to an interview with Hillary Rodham Clinton to highlight that he did not talk to the publication.

"The gay press may feel like I'm not giving them enough love, but basically all press feels that way at all times," Obama told *The Advocate*:

He said he's frequently spoken out against homophobia and in support of gay rights.

Asked what he could reasonably accomplish for the gay community as president, Obama said he can "reasonably see" repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy as well as signing legislation to ban workplace discrimination against gays. He said he'd like transgendered people to be covered by the law, but thinks it would be tough to get such legislation through Congress.

Obama also said he's interested in ensuring that same-sex couples in civil unions get federal benefits.

Clinton Asked About Executive Order Ending 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'

In an exclusive and wide-ranging interview with the *Philadelphia Gay News*, Senator Hillary Clinton discusses the option of issuing an executive order or signing statement to end the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, the ban on openly gay servicemembers.

The interview touches on issues not yet raised in the presidential nomination process. She discusses IRS filings by LGBT couples, equality in immigration policy, services for LGBT youth and seniors, and whether the federal Department of Education should give local school districts and teachers direction on presenting positive LGBT lesson plans.

She is also the first candidate to address the government-sponsored arrest, torture and murder of gay men in Iran, Iraq, Egypt and other countries in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Despite concerted efforts, Senator Barack Obama has not granted a formal interview to the *Philadelphia Gay News*. PGN, now in its 32nd year, took the unusual step of displaying Obama's lack of communication to the local LGBT press, leaving blank space on the newspaper's front page where Obama's interview would have appeared, illustrating his lack of accessibility to the local gay press. Obama has not granted a formal interview to any local gay press in 1,522 days, when he spoke to the *Windy City Times* during his Senate race in 2004.

PGN requested an equal chance to interview Senator Obama as with Senator Clinton, given the same questions and time limits.

PGN offered equal time to Republican candidate Senator John McCain. McCain's campaign declined the invitation respectfully. "It's a sad day when we are treated with more respect from the Republican candidate, John McCain, than a Democratic senator," said Segal.

"With McCain, his top press representative called us back within three hours. It took seven weeks for Obama's representative to acknowledge."

Gay Hate Church Gets Taste of Own Medicine

More than 400 people converged on the Topeka, Kan., on Sun., Apr. 1, to protest outside the Westboro Baptist Church.

Straight, gay and trans protesters drew support from locals as they staged The Million Fag March outside the church, which is notorious for picketing the funerals of U.S. soldiers killed in action.

"It's about time we did something like this again," local woman Hope Prescott told *The Topeka Capital-Journal*.

"We feel somewhat responsible for the Phelps and Westboro Baptist Church. It's about time we show our support for gays rights and all rights."

The Baptist group — slogan "God Hates America, God Hates Fags" — believes that disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the deaths of American soldiers in the Iraq war are due to the "moral downfall" of the country.

The controversial church appears at high-profile funerals in order to gain publicity for its cause, despite laws banning such demonstrations.

It has about 75 members, the majority of whom are relatives of its leader, the Rev. Fred Phelps.

They first came to prominence at the funeral of Matthew Shepard in 1999.

Shepard, murdered in a homophobic attack, brought the issue of gay hate to prominence in America, leading to attempts to introduce hate crime legislation.

Phelps and his followers waved placards at the funeral reading: "Matt Shepard Rots in Hell" and "AIDS Kills Fags Dead."

Sunday's good-natured protest was organized by Chris Love, another Kansas resident.

"I invited Westboro to come out and join us, but they didn't come," he told the paper.

"I don't think what we're doing is going to change them. It's just time to show people that not everyone in Kansas is like the Phelps'."

"We're against everything that church does. The theory has been to ignore them, and they'll go away."

"It's been 20 years, and they're still here. Now we are too."

Last year the Phelps awoke to a pair of messages spray painted to a sign and a fence on the grounds of their Kansas church.

The message on the sign said, "God hates the Phelps," while the message on the fence read, "God hates intolerance."

In April 2007 the governor of Kansas signed into law a bill aimed at stopping WBC from protesting at the funerals of soldiers killed in Iraq.

Kansas joined 16 other states in introducing local legislation to bar the hate group's activities.

In November a jury awarded the father of a Marine whose funeral was targeted by WBC nearly \$11 million in damages.

Albert Snyder claimed that protesters destroyed his only chance to bury in peace the son he lost in Iraq. He filed a complaint in June 2006.

During the civil trial in a Baltimore federal court, the jury considered whether Westboro Baptist Church was liable for an intentional infliction of emotional distress based on the message from its members' signs.

The jurors decided the Snyder family's expectation of privacy at Matthew Snyder's funeral was violated by the church members' protest.

Cuba Considers Sweeping Gay Rights Bill

Cuban lawmakers will vote in June on a bill that would make the country one of the world's most progressive in LGBT civil rights.

The draft legislation would make it illegal to discriminate in jobs and housing against gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transpeople. It would recognize same-sex domestic partnerships, although not grant marriage or adoption rights, and it would allow transsexuals to have identity cards showing their true sex. In addition the bill would require the government health service to pay for sex reassignment surgery.

The measure has been championed by Mariela Castro, the daughter of Cuban president Raul Castro. She heads the government-funded National Centre for Sex Education and has been a longtime LGBT rights advocate.

Mariela Castro said she would have liked to have had the bill include marriage but she and LGBT leaders believed it would be met with opposition and could jeopardize the bill.

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GLSEN's Day of Silence Honors the Memory of Lawrence King

Following the recent murder of eighth grade student Lawrence King, students across America will dedicate Fri, Apr. 25, to the memory of King on GLSEN's 12th annual National Day of Silence.

Students will observe a vow of silence to bring attention to anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender name-calling, bullying and harassment in middle schools, high schools and college campuses.

While this event is held every year to bring hope to millions of students, the murder of Lawrence King represents a literal and absolute definition of the silence many of them feel. According to friends, Lawrence was murdered because of his sexual orientation.

The Day of Silence was created by University of Virginia students in 1996 and became a national event in 1997. GLSEN became the national sponsor in 2001. Hundreds of thousands of students are expected to participate

on Apr. 25, many of whom will wear stickers and pass out speaking cards that read:

"Please understand my reasons for not speaking today. I am participating in the Day of Silence (DOS), a national youth movement bringing attention to the silence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their allies. My deliberate silence echoes that silence, which is caused by anti-LGBT bullying, name-calling and harassment. This year's DOS is held in memory of Lawrence King, a 15 year-old student who was killed in school because of his sexual orientation and gender expression. I believe that ending the silence is the first step toward building awareness and making a

commitment to address these injustices. Think about the voices you are not hearing today."

GLSEN's 2005 National School Climate Survey found that four out of five of LGBT students report verbal, sexual or physical harassment at school and 29 percent report missing at least a day of school in the past month out of fear for their personal safety. Additionally, 64.3 percent of LGBT students feel unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation and 40.7 percent because of their gender expression.

The Day of Silence is one way students and their allies are making anti-LGBT bullying, harassment and name-calling unacceptable in America's schools.

Kids Coming Out of Closet Earlier Than Ever

The slaying of 15-year-old Lawrence King on Feb. 12 and the reaction to it illustrated a social shift characterized by gay youths "coming out" younger and their straight counterparts learning the art of tolerance.

"While there is increasing acceptance, the world's still a hostile place for gay teenagers," said Virginia Uribe, a retired Los Angeles Unified School District counselor and founder of the district's Project 10, a support program for gay students.

"They deal with hostile families, hostile churches, if they're involved, and they deal with hostile schools."

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students are coming out of the closet younger and younger.

"I think some students are feeling more comfortable coming out, feeling empowered in the sense they are aware they have certain rights," said Uribe, now

executive director of the non-profit Friends of Project 10, which supports the LAUSD program.

Uribe, who is a lesbian, was not "out" in 1986 when students upset over the harassment of a gay schoolmate urged her to help. She was spurred by the knowledge that the suicide rate is 25 percent higher among gay teens than their straight counterparts. Her principal supported the drive, and Project 10 was born.

But it didn't come without resistance. "Here I am trying to keep kids from killing themselves," she said. "I remember thinking, 'Why are people starting to attack me?'"

"The new gay generation is

about: 'Let's move on. I'm gay. Take me the way I am or not at all, and if you don't like it, that's your problem,'" said David McEachern, president of the Santa Clarita chapter of Parents and Friends of Gays and Lesbians.

Domestic Partners in Ariz. Win Benefits

A panel in Arizona, where voters once turned down a constitutional ban on gay marriage, approved a plan April 1 to provide taxpayer-subsidized health coverage for the domestic partners of state employees and retirees.

The Governor's Regulatory Review Council, which has the final say over many agencies' proposed rules, voted 4-0 to approve changes floated by the Department of Administration with support from Gov. Janet Napolitano, a Democrat. Some Republican legislators opposed the move.

Dependents of domestic partners also will qualify. Employees will be able to sign up for benefits as of Oct 1.

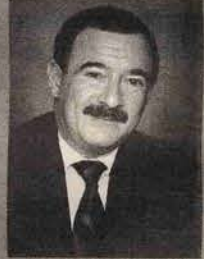
Supporters said providing benefits to partners and their depen-

dents would help the state reduce costly turnover by being more competitive in recruitment and retention. Napolitano, among others, has argued that it was a question of fairness.

In her first year in office, Napolitano issued an executive order banning discrimination in state personnel practices based on sexual orientation.

Critics said the benefits rule changes would undermine the institution of marriage, burden the state with added costs.

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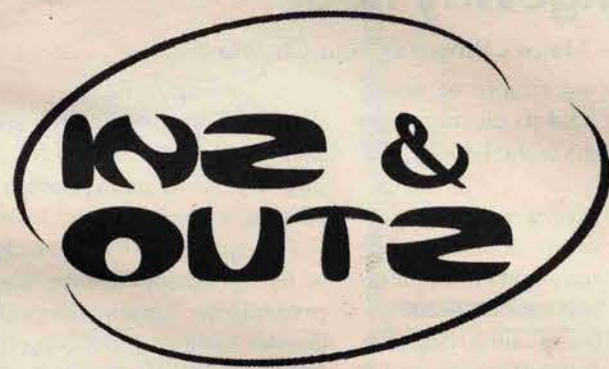
A new coalition, the LGBT Foreign Policy Project, has been formed to push the U.S. State Department to take more action on abuse and discrimination against LGBT residents of more than 100 foreign countries.

"Secretary Rice could speak out specifically against these violations of LGBT human decency, documented by her own department — just as she spoke out against violence toward women only a week ago," wrote Michael Guest, a member of the coalition and former U.S. ambassador to Romania who quit over unequal

treatment for gay people at the State Department.

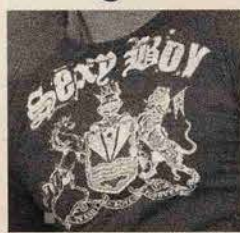
"There's ample irony, of course, that the State Department would annually critique foreign governments' human rights failings, even while turning a blind eye to basic unfairness in the policies it itself employs," he wrote, on Bilerico.com.

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War of Words Between Gay Bashing Politician and PFLAG

In her short time in the House of Representatives Sally Kern has built a reputation for homophobia.

An Oklahoma politician who described gay people as a bigger threat to America than terrorism has turned on local members of the advocacy group Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) she met with recently.

Representative Sally Kern received international attention after her homophobic speech to a group of fellow Republicans was posted on YouTube by the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund.

She met with Rev. Loyce Newton-Edwards, Rev. Dr. Kathy McCallie and Rev. Jim Shields of PFLAG Mar. 27.

Both sides described the encounter as polite and cordial.

"We appreciate Representative Kern taking the time to meet with us and consider an important, ongoing dialogue about our families and loved ones," PFLAG's Oklahoma City chapter President Loyce Newton-Edwards said after the meeting.

"Representative Kern expressed a commendable desire to consider every family, every Oklahoman, and every constituent.

"Today she took an important first step forward that, we hope, will be the beginning of many conversations with our families and our community."

Yet just hours after the meeting,

she said she was being misrepresented.

She told *The Oklahoman*:

"(PFLAG) have taken my statements and have spun them to make it appear that I am backing off my comments that homosexuality is a sin.

"As a Christian who believes in the authority of God's word, I will never retract my comments that homosexuality is a sin."

PFLAG denied any such misrepresentation, but Kern was on the attack.

The Oklahoma Conservative Political Action Committee rallied to her defense, calling the three PFLAG representatives "false prophets" and "phony clergy" who "want to destroy Representative Kern and make an example of her."

Now Kern has written a rambling letter to a local newspaper, citing research into homosexuality conducted in the early 1950s and stating: "Homosexuals are already citizens who have equal rights. They want special rights for the acceptance of their deviant lifestyle.

"I'm thankful that Oklahoma is different than California and New York. I pray it stays that way."

As a result of the media storm surrounding her comments, her son has been forced to deny he is gay after news reports he was censured

while at college for repeatedly cruising for sex in toilets.

In her original comments Kern accused homosexuals of pushing a "gay agenda" and trying to "indoctrinate" children as young as two years old through tolerance education and gay-straight alliances.

"This stuff, it's deadly and it's spreading, and it will destroy our young people," Kern said.

"It will destroy this nation."

The Democratic party has announced that Ron Marlett, a 59-year-old social worker, will challenge Kern for the Oklahoma City seat in the state House of Representatives in November's election.

In 2004 Kern was elected for the first time with 67.65 per cent of the vote.

Her Democrat opponent, Ronald E. Wasson, won 4,215 votes or 32.35 per cent.

In 2006 she ran unopposed.

In her short time in the House she has built a reputation for homophobia.

Two years ago she sponsored legislation compelling libraries to move "gay themed" books to adult sections.

"If we expose children to sexual material without parental knowledge and guidance, we're programming them for destruction," she said.

FDA Reviews Safety of HIV Drugs on Heart Attack Fears

The Food and Drug Administration says recent data show patients taking HIV drugs from GlaxoSmithKline and Bristol-Myers Squibb may have increased risk of heart attack.

FDA said data pooled from a 33,000-patient study of HIV patients showed those taking Glaxo's Ziagen and Bristol-Myers' Videx had a greater chance of heart attack than patients on other medications.

Labeling changes could be needed for the drugs, FDA said, though it stressed it is still working with incomplete data. The agency does not have information on heart attack risks of two other drugs in the class of virus-fighting medications.

In an announcement posted to its website, the FDA said it would make recommendations on the drugs after it completes its review.

Until then, doctors should weigh the risks and benefits of the drugs for patients, the agency said.

Glaxo and Bristol reviewed their clinical trial data on the drugs and both said they found no increased risk of heart attack.

Company representatives did not immediately return phone calls.

Camp Lickalotta Causes Uproar in Rural N.C.

A lesbian couple attempting to create a gay-friendly camping space named "Camp Lickalotta" in rural North Carolina claim they were booted from the campground where they lived because of anti-gay discrimination.

Nancy Leedy and Joan Beasley were evicted from Golden Valley Campgrounds in Rutherford County, about 200 miles from Atlanta, on March 12. The owners of the campground, Joe and Lynn Hoyle, said the couple inappropriately used the Golden Valley Campgrounds name on Camp Lickalotta materials to promote the

camp's Bushstock '08 Music Festival, slated for May 16-18. The festival will now be held at a private campground in Lincolnton, N.C., Leedy.

Camp Lickalotta stands for "Lickalotta prejudice, lickalotta pollutants and lickalotta pessism," Leedy said.

Outflix Moving to Ridgeway Four

The Outflix Film Festival has a new home— Malco's Ridgeway Four Cinema.

The annual film festival will be held at Malco's Ridgeway Four, Sept. 5-11. Outflix starts the weekend after Labor Day.

During the last few months, there has been a growing amount of uncertainty over the future of Peabody Place Mall and the ultimate fate of Muvico Theaters, last year's site for the event.

The Outflix Committee and the Board of Directors of Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center recently decided that there was too great a risk to plan a multi-night film festival only to see the venue close, downsize or undergo construction.

By moving the festival to the Ridgeway Four, the community center meets a growing need to have a GLBT event in East Memphis. Ridgeway Four is located near the I-240 loop for people traveling from downtown and Midtown, as well as from Cordova, Germantown and Collierville.

For the past couple of years, Outflix has held its closing night party and films at the Brooks Museum.

This year, there will be a preview party at the Brooks in August. All seven nights in September will be at Ridgeway Four.

The Outflix Committee has been busy screening movies for

the upcoming festival.

One movie already booked for 2008 is the film *FreeHeld*, which just won an Academy Award for best short documentary.


This spring the Ridgeway Four is being equipped with digital projection, which will allow Outflix to show movies on film, Beta tape and DVD. At past fes-

tivals, most movies have been screened using Beta tape or DVD.

Outflix is still looking for individuals and businesses to spon-

sor the 2008 festival. If you are interested, please visit the

website at www.outflix-festival.org.



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Gay Couple Attends Scottsboro, Ala. High's Prom

Judge rules school cannot ban pair from the festivities.

Chelsea Overstreet and Lauren Martin were like many other Scottsboro, Ala. High School girls Saturday afternoon, Mar. 29, both nervous and excited about going to their first prom in a only a few hours.

But unlike the others, they went to the dance as a gay couple, something the Scottsboro City Board of Education tried unsuccessfully to stop.

"It's something they had been planning for a year," Martin's mother, Connie Farrington, said during a press conference with their lawyer, Parker Edmiston, at his Scottsboro office. "Just like every other child, she was ecstatic" about going.

But the day before spring break several weeks ago, the mothers said, their girls were told by school officials that they could not go as a

homosexual couple.

"It was a big letdown" for the girls, Farrington said. She said they had already bought their prom tickets and formal wear for the dance.

A last-minute court order from Jackson County Circuit Judge John Graham of Stevenson prohibited the board from banning the girls from the junior-senior prom at Scottsboro's Goosepond Civic Center Mar. 29.

In making his 10:15 a.m. ruling, Graham cited two federal court rulings. In one, the U.S. Supreme Court said "states and their agencies ... cannot set-out homosexuals for special treatment..." The other "prohibits publicly-funded schools ... from barring same-sex couples from school functions."

During the press conference, Edmiston, Farrington and Overstreet's mother, Sarah Collins,



Lauren Martin, 16, left and Chelsea Overstreet, 17, right, attended the Scottsboro, Ala., High School's prom as a gay couple.

answered reporters' questions as the girls stayed in another room. Edmiston said the girls would not be talking to reporters, although

photos and videos of them were permitted after the press conference. Overstreet, 17, a junior, wore her prom dress while Martin, 16, a

sophomore, had on a tuxedo.

"This is just a dance," Edmiston said. "Adults need not get involved."

TSA Admits Forcing Woman to Remove a Nipple Ring

The Transportation Security Administration said it will change the way its officers search passengers with body piercings after a Texas woman complained she was forced to remove a nipple ring with pliers in order to board an airplane.

Mandi Hamlin, 37, had demanded an apology and her Los Angeles-based attorney sent a letter to the TSA requesting a civil rights investigation.

Hamlin said she was trying to board a flight from Lubbock to Dallas on Feb. 24 when she was scanned by a TSA agent after passing through a larger metal detector without problems.

The female TSA agent used a handheld detector that beeped when it passed in front of Hamlin's chest, the Dallas-area resident said.

Hamlin said she told the woman she was wearing nipple piercings. The agent then called over her male colleagues, one of whom said she would have to remove the jewelry, Hamlin said.

Hamlin said she could not remove them and asked whether she

could instead display her pierced breasts in private to the female agent. But several other male officers told her she could not board her flight until the jewelry was out, she said.

Hamlin was taken behind a curtain and managed to remove one bar-shaped piercing but had trouble with the second, a ring. She said the officer gave her pliers to remove the ring, a process which caused physical pain.

The TSA said in a statement on its website that the officers properly followed procedures, but that the procedures must change. In the future passengers can either allow a visual inspection of their piercings, or remove them, the agency said.

The statement stopped short of apologizing to Hamlin.

Treat Same-Sex Partner of Congress Member Like Spouse Pelosi Tells Gates

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D) reportedly had to step in when the military refused to allow the same-sex partner of Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc) (pictured) on a military flight taking members of Congress and their spouses on a fact-finding trip to Europe.

The Politico reports that Pelosi called Defense Secretary Robert Gates directly. Under House rules members may take their spouses with them on military flights if there is room and when it is "necessary for protocol purposes."

Baldwin has been in a domestic partnership with Lauren Azar for years, and exchanged vows in 1998, although the relationship is

not recognized legally in the state of Wisconsin.

Baldwin is one of only two openly gay members of Congress. The other is Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass).

The Politico reports that in her phone call to Gates, Pelosi told Gates he should follow the prece-

dent established by her predecessor, Dennis Hastert (R) who did not prevent Baldwin from taking Azar on an earlier trip.

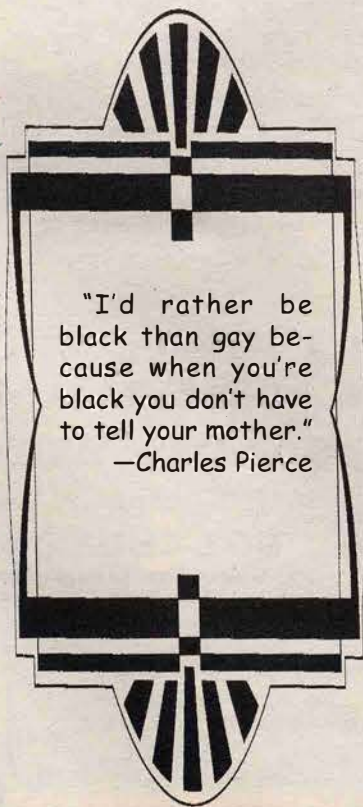
Gates reportedly told Pelosi that he would okay Azar for the trip once he received a letter from the speaker authorizing it, but warned that it was a one-time agreement.

McCain Won't Soften GOP Platform's Anti-gay Plank

The McCain president campaign doesn't plan to try to moderate planned Republican platform planks calling for constitutional amendments to ban abortion and to deny marriage rights to same-sex couples, according to blogger Michael Crawford.

"So when McCain's campaign and Log Cabin Republicans try to hoodwink you into voting for John McCain in November,

remember that his 'straight talk' really is all about ... straight and GLBT people need not apply," he writes.



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Philanthropists Ensure Community's Future

On a recent Thursday morning, Joseph Rosenthal, 77, drove from his barn-red, four-story house on Buena Vista Terrace to a lawyer's office in the Castro, where he quietly transferred a substantial part of his estate to the endowment fund of the Horizon Foundation, a grant-giving organization for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

"I have almost no family living at this time," said Rosenthal, a retired librarian. "Certainly, not having children prompts one to consider other options, such as supporting charitable organizations in the area of my particular interest."

The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender movement has traditionally depended on smaller, grassroots donations for specific causes. But more aging philanthropists like Rosenthal, whose generation was the first to be "out," are making end-of-life gifts to help secure the future of the community.

"If I had died in 1980, I would have had no idea that the HIV epidemic was around the corner," said retired venture capitalist David Gleba, 45, who has contributed more than \$250,000 to the Horizon Foundation. "After I am gone, I would like to see the part of my estate continue to work in succeeding younger generations."

In the past three decades, gay philanthropies such as Horizon Foundation, Pride Foundation and Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice have helped shape today's lesbian and gay community, funneling millions of dollars into numerous HIV/AIDS treatment services, and civil rights, social advocacy and political campaigns. According to a group that advises grantmakers, New York-based Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues, grants made to gay organizations nationwide have more than doubled from under \$30 million in 2002 to \$65.5 million in 2006.

"People feel more security that we are here to stay and we are fulfilling a purpose, so more are thinking of LGBT foundations as places to leave their bequests," said Katherine Acey, executive director of the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, a New York-based organization that supports groups in more than 40 countries. "I see the beginning of a trend."

A new record for bequests was set recently, when former Microsoft employee Ric Weiland, who died in 2006, left \$65 million to the Pride Foundation and several other organizations, said to be the largest gift ever made to the gay community in the United States.

While few would be able to match Weiland's generosity, many gay and lesbian donors, who usually don't have children, are likely to consider end-of-life gifts, philanthropy experts say.

"In the past two years, we have seen a huge upswing" in estate donations, said Zan McCulloch-Lussier, spokesman for the Pride Foundation, which estimates that each year about 30 donors include the organization in their wills. "And we know that we only hear about the small percent of those who are actually planning to do it."

According to a survey of 1,300 donors conducted by the Horizon Foundation, for example, about 52 percent said they are "very likely" to make estate gifts to the gay and lesbian movement, while 87 percent think it is "important" and "very important" to them to "help future generations." The foundation estimates it will receive at least \$35 million in future estate gifts to its lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender endowment fund.

"The success of this vision does not depend on any assumption that LGBT people are richer than the non-LGBT population," said Roger Doughty, the executive director of the foundation. "All our projections are based on assumptions that we are 'average,' except that fewer of us have children and the lives of many reaching their 'planned giving years' have been deeply touched by the growth, struggles, and triumphs of the LGBT movement."

Jeff Lewis, 65, who said he is a substantial donor to the gay community, became active in political

fundraising and philanthropy during the failed Briggs Initiative of 1978, which would have banned gays and lesbians from teaching in California's public schools.

Thirty years later, despite major changes in the society, Lewis said the gay movement still faces opposition from conservative groups and needs financial support to help fight for its civil rights.

"Given the political situation we have been in the last 10 years, we have more to gain through the courts than through the other outlets," said Lewis, who came out to his friends more than 40 years ago. Donating to endowments "is an important way to change the situation in the longer term."

Many gay and lesbian philanthropies nationwide are vying to tap the lucrative market of an aging gay population. Horizon Foundation, which wants to raise its endowment to \$100 million over 25 years, collaborates with professional financial advisers and estate-planning attorneys, sponsoring seminars around planned giving. Astraea foundation has created the Women's Will Circle, a program that helps publicize donors who have included the foundation in their estates. The OutGiving campaign of the Gill Foundation, created by Tim Gill, the inventor of Quark software, recruits philanthropists to secure large-scale and long-term financial support for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

"As a society, we are more open talking about bequests than we were before," said Liz Livingston Howard, an associate director of the Center for Nonprofit Management at Northwestern University.

"It speaks of the sophistication of nonprofit organizations being more focused on long-term sustainability and insuring their future."

TWO Launches Dynamic Multi-Media Website Refuting the 'Ex-Gay' Myth

TruthWinsOut.org (TWO) launched its innovative new website Mar. 26, enhancing its ability to fight the ex-gay myth and right wing propaganda.

The site will be a leading educational resource and an all-encompassing look at the dangerous world of conversion therapy. For years, the ex-gay industry had dominated the flow of information on this topic. With this site, our movement has finally surpassed our opponents and we now have the means to counter ex-gay lies and reach vulnerable people with messages of truth and hope.

"TruthWinsOut.org is a one-stop-shop for information on the ex-gay myth and an action center for those who want to fight back against this insidious industry," said TWO's Executive Director Wayne Besen. "We believe this site will help people come out, keep families together and even save lives. This is a great day for those who have long wanted to stop the spread of ex-gay misinformation and help people escape the ex-gay trap."

Michael Airhart, who founded Ex-Gay Watch in 2002, will publish daily on TWO's blog, offering his insights and a deep understanding of this topic. Airhart formerly worked as senior business editor for McClatchy-Tribune news wires in Washington. In 2005 he became a director for a leading blog syndication company. He also co-founded Men Can Stop Rape in 1997.

"The ex-gay industry has declared war against GLBT people as it has become enmeshed with the far right," said Michael Airhart. "By joining with TruthWinsOut.org, I am answering a personal calling to defend individual liberties, religious freedom, constitutional rights, family unity — and sexual strugglers — against exploitation by divisive, intolerant and dishonest extremists."

TWO's website will include an

extensive and unprecedented video catalogue of "ex-gay" survivors and sexual orientation experts. The videos and website highlight an active and robust year, where TWO will challenge the "ex-gay" industry across America.

To make this dream a reality, TWO has relied on the contributions of generous foundations and individuals: Arcus Foundation, Gill Foundation, William A. Kerr Foundation and John Sweet, Andrew Tobias, VanAmeringen Foundation, Jonathan D. Lewis Foundation, Weston Milliken and the Liberty Hill Foundation, Bill Cohen and the Haworth Press, Mitchell Gold, Linda Kerner, Karen Ferguson, Richard Nolan and Bob Pingpank, Worth Ross and Clint Trout, and those whose smaller donations have been so crucial to our success.

"This was a team effort and I thank everyone who has invested in TruthWinsOut.org and who labored intensively to create this beacon of illumination," said Besen. "With continued support, we can build on this achievement and aggressively combat the predatory and well-funded ex-gay industry."

Additionally, TWO is using its new website to call for volunteers nationally to come forward and help in cities where it will counter "ex-gay" rallies. In 2008, it is also a major priority for the organization to videotape the testimonials of lesbian and minority survivors. If the so-called "ex-gay" ministries have harmed you, please contact TWO and tell your story.

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 www.truthwinsout.org/.

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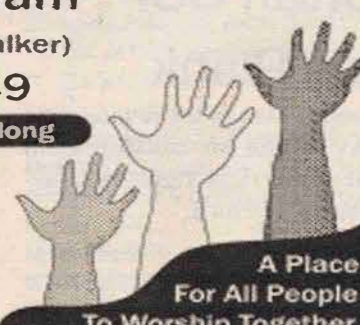
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Rachel Maddow: Progressive Media's Next Mainstream Star

As the seemingly endless Democratic presidential primary slog enters its second spring, one amazing woman has managed—by relentless dint of hard work, long experience, sharp intelligence, quick wit, quicker quips and a winning smile—to shatter the glass ceiling and take her rightful place in the traditional boys' club of big-time politics.

No, not her—Rachel Maddow. That's right—a woman who calls herself “a supplicant who worships in the Temple of Journalism”—but who others have described as “Amy Goodman with animal noises”—is now firmly ensconced in the upper echelon of the political punditocracy.

With her own rising radio show on Air America, coupled with regular appearances on MSNBC's Countdown with Keith Olbermann program, where she is often, oddly and excellently paired with Patrick Buchanan, this self-described “35-year-old, liberal, lesbian girl-who-looks-like-a-man” is on the brink of becoming progressive media's next mainstream breakout star.

One significant measure of Maddow's new-found favor: the decision by MSNBC to hire her as a regular panelist on its newest nightly campaign program *Race for the White House*—and to allow Air America to simulcast the 6 p.m. nightly program as the first hour of its own nightly Rachel Maddow show.

The cable executives are betting a lot on their new program, which also features NBC News' chief White House correspondent David Gregory (who replaces Tucker Carlson.)

Race for the White House will be up against stiff competition from CNN's *Election Center* and Fox News Channel's *America's Election HQ*, but installing Maddow as a regular gives MSNBC an edge its competitors can't match—a telegenic and true progressive voice for an election cycle dominated by progressive politics and politicians.

The MSNBC simulcast on Air America—in addition to making an impressive statement about the progressive radio network's growing stature—also promises to pull in a new progressive audience to MSNBC, which is successfully positioning itself as the hot new alternative to Fox News in the cable firmament.

A California native dedicated to promoting AIDS prevention and gay rights—she claims to have been the first openly gay American to receive a Rhodes scholarship—Maddow is also articulate, winsome, and often self-deprecating, someone who says in the same sentence that she tries “to be authoritative, transparently sourced, and pretty comprehensive” in her work, while remaining “a total dork.”

Like most radio talk show hosts, Maddow is forthright about the fact that she is *not* a journalist. “I think of myself as a commentator and a pundit, an analyst but not a reporter and not a journalist,” she said.

Maddow started in radio less than a decade ago as a sidekick on a commercial show in western New England, when she went to an open on-air audition and was hired on the spot.

“As soon as I started talking on the microphone, I was like, ‘Oh, right! This is what I'm supposed to be doing,’” she recalled.

“I wish I figured this out before I was 26. I realized that I had a knack for it, and that it was really fun.” Still, she wasn't convinced that radio was right for her in the long run, so after a year, she took time off, finished a dissertation “and actually did get my doctoral.” Four years later, she had a national radio show. What happened?

“Air America's first day on the air was the day before my 31st birthday—Mar. 31, 2004—and I forced them to hire me,” she says with another laugh. “I just pulled every trick I could out of the hat. They really just seemed to hire celebrities, really. They had Chuck D and Al Franken and Janeane Garofalo and ... celebrities, celebrities. And all I had was, well, an ex-girlfriend who pretended she was in Al Franken's class at Harvard and brought him tapes of my hosted music show as the DJ

in the morning from western Massachusetts. So Air America had no business hiring me.”

Although she credits “tenacity more than talent” for her success, it's actually the combination of the two that makes her so compelling—along with enough self-confidence not to take “no” for an answer.

She's also right for MSNBC and perhaps beyond. Certainly her mix of news, opinion and entertainment—the mother's milk of talk radio—is also right for the hypercaffeinated world of cable television news.

“I noticed when I first started doing cable that there'd be this real exuberance among the news producers, particularly younger cable news producers, about talk radio hosts. I could see the transition actually happening. I think in cable news—whether they intended this or not—they really think that what talk radio has is what they ought to be. Which is, you know, entertaining hosts to whom viewers and listeners have loyalty, in whom they trust to provide information, who supplant other sources of news.

“But they are more full service than that. They are also providing analysis and setting up conflicts, either between themselves and other people or among their guests—and being at the same time, funny and entertaining,” she continued. “I just believe that there is a way to do all that with integ-



ry. I don't think that mixture of information, analysis and entertainment is itself corrupt or dishonest. The way to do it is by being very clear about what it is that you are doing. The commentary can include parody songs and making fun of people, or, you know, ranting in my dungeon. It can involve a very wide range of stylistic and communicative techniques. You just have to be clear about the distinctions.”

Rachel Maddow is nothing if not clear—about the distinctions between news, opinion and entertainment, but also about her own distinct beliefs, politics, and persona, and about where progressive media may be heading. “I think the more power the Democrats gain, the better off progressive radio and

progressive media is,” she concluded. “I felt like I was outside banging on a locked door when Republicans were in power seemingly everywhere. But the closer we get to retaking the country, the closer we get to overtaking the traditional media in terms of content and influence.”

Maddow's newest bosses at NBC News obviously share her assessment—if not her sentiments—as witnessed by the new gig with David Gregory and the ground-breaking Air America simulcast. If they really have the courage of their convictions, however, they'll soon stop making her just a panelist—and go ahead and create her own cable television show.


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The Truth About Bathhouses and Unsafe Sex

A San Francisco study finds that sex venues facilitate more responsible behavior, not less.

Commentary by Joseph Couture

What we have been told about bathhouses is untrue. Conservatives and moral crusaders with an agenda want us to believe they are places that foster unsafe sex and irresponsible behavior. But finally, the truth of the situation has been presented in credible new scientific research.

Psychologist Dr. William Woods and his colleagues from the University of California at San Francisco have come up with groundbreaking research that turns conventional thinking on its head. His findings show not only that bathhouses do not in themselves promote unsafe sex, but also that they actually facilitate more responsible behavior, not less.

Studies by Dr. Woods found that of the men who visited bathhouses most only had oral sex, and of those who did have anal sex, the majority of them did so safely with a condom. Only a small minority of men engaged in high-risk unprotected anal sex.

But here's the kicker. What the researchers also discovered in their investigation was that of the men who had engaged in unsafe anal sex, twice as many had done so in the last three months in a private space like their own home over public spaces like bathhouses.

What this means is that men were having twice as much unsafe sex at home or other private spaces rather than bathhouse by a margin of two to one, leading to the conclusion that bathhouses actually

decrease the risk of unprotected sex rather than increase it.

Asked for an explanation of these findings, Dr. Woods was clear: "The number one thing you can do to promote safe sex is to have condoms available," he said in an interview. "If there are no condoms, it may lead to a bad decision to have unprotected sex." He says that as a general rule bathhouses today make condoms available and encourage safer sex, a policy he says is working.

Asked to speculate on other factors that may be a work, Woods says he thinks three other things are involved. The first is that men consider anonymous partners at the baths to be high risk and are less likely to take chances with them. Secondly, and conversely, he says men having sex in more private settings may feel they know their partners more intimately and may take more risks as a result. The last reason is that if condoms are available like they are in bathhouses, it is easy to make the right choice.

A number of vocal critics of the New York City bathhouses have either called for the venues to be closed down or for a radical change in policy in how they operate because of recent statistics showing an increase in HIV rates among young men. Many favor the San Francisco model where private rooms are banned and all sex is required to take place out in the open where members of the staff and health department can police for unsafe sex.

Woods found that there was no difference in either the rates of high-risk sex or general behavior of men who

have sex with men in regions with different policies. Men where bathhouses were illegal had just as many partners and the same number of casual sexual encounters as men in cities where bathhouses were permitted.

The research team discovered that variations in policy only changed where the behavior occurred, but it had no effect on whether it or not it happened. This means that by closing one venue, they simply moved the activity to another location. "The risk with that," says Dr. Woods "is that you might very well end up driving the activity to a location where condoms and education are less available."

What Woods concludes is that if you were to close the baths, overall rates of condom use would decrease while the number of sexual partners among men who have sex with men would remain the same. Essentially, opponents of the bathhouse would effectively achieve the opposite of what they say they are trying to do—reduce the spread of HIV.

Dr. Woods points out one last truth, people with an agenda often use statistics—especially HIV stats—in a self-serving way that is often not supported by the objective research.

It is worth asking, What is the real goal behind all the rhetoric and rush to close the baths? Is it about protecting men from AIDS, or is it about a group of temperance crusaders trying to enforce their own moral code on the gay community?

Joseph Couture is a freelance journalist and the author of the just released "Peek: Inside the Private World of Public Sex" by The Haworth Press.

Gay Character to be Revealed on *Pushing Daisies*

Pushing Daisies creator Bryan Fuller recently told AfterElton.com that there is indeed a gay character on his kooky, colorful drama, and no, it's not one of Chuck's spinster, swim-loving aunts.

Stop reading if you want to be surprised when the show returns for a second season this fall.

If not, the ... it's the coroner.

Yup, Fuller gave the site this exclusive scoop for its "Gays In Primetime" special report. He says that the plan was—and perhaps still is?—to reveal that the "mmm hmmm"-ing coroner (Sy Richardson) has a wee crush on Ned's private eye partner, Emerson Cod (Chi McBride.)

Well, guess that explains why he keeps letting Ned, Emerson and Chuck in to manhandle dead bodies at the morgue. That and the occasional bribe, of course.

"I didn't want to just do another, like, pretty gay person," said Fuller. "I thought it would be interesting to have an older character be gay."

Fuller, who's openly gay himself, says he doesn't have an agenda. He wouldn't force a gay character if it didn't serve a show's best interests.

In fact, Olive Snook (Kristen Chenoweth) was originally sup-



Kristen Chenoweth as Olive Snook on *Pushing Daisies*

posed to be a lesbian.

But Fuller says making her straight created the opportunity for some romantic tension with Ned—and have her conflict with his resurrected lady love, Chuck.

And when a network executive suggested that Emerson could be gay, Fuller said no because he'd already fleshed out a heterosexual plot for that character.

Planet Out Selling *The Advocate*

PlanetOut Inc., a media and entertainment company exclusively focused on the gay and lesbian market, announced Apr. 9 that it has entered into a binding letter of intent with an affiliate of here! Networks to acquire PlanetOut's magazine and book publishing businesses.

The transaction includes marketing commitments, cash payments, and the assumption of the majority of the operating liabilities and assets of the business by here!, and commitments by PlanetOut to provide certain marketing and advertising services to here! Networks and here! films.

A definitive agreement is expected to be finalized by Apr. 30, and the transaction is expected to close on or before Aug. 31.

"We are extremely pleased that here! Networks will be the new parent company for our publishing business," said Karen Magee, chief executive officer of PlanetOut Inc.


"here! Networks co-founders Stephen P. Jarchow and Paul Colichman have long been admirers and strong supporters of *The Advocate* and *Out*, and we believe that our magazines, their associated websites and Alyson books will thrive under here!'s ownership.

"Most importantly, we believe that the divestiture of our publishing businesses will enable PlanetOut Inc. to devote all of our attention and resources to our core online businesses, GAY.COM and PlanetOut.com. This will ensure that all of our powerful brands have a better chance to grow and prosper, and will ultimately produce greater value for our shareholders," added Magee.


"In adding PlanetOut's magazine and book publishing group to our television, film and online media properties, we continue the LGBTQ legacy that the men and women of PlanetOut have built and nurtured. We recognize the responsibility and opportunity that LGBTQ media has in making a meaningful and positive impact on society and culture. We will protect and expand these iconic brands with integrity, passion and commitment," said Jarchow and Colichman.

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Memphis Set to Roll with Laughter as Native Son Returns to Share His *Trip Down The Pink Carpet*

Notice to Tennessee's best known sons and daughters: Hang on to your notoriety and fame as long as you can. Davey Crockett, Isaac Hayes and even the venerable Al Gore, Jr., take notice. And as for the Volunteer State's very own crop of home grown divas, Dolly, Aretha and even Minnie Pearl...you may need to reinforce your stature.

Why all the commotion? Because Tennessee's latest addition to its native Hall of Famers is returning y'all! Home being our very own land of dogwood and mockingbirds (though this bird's feathers sport a somewhat brighter flair); it's the turf where he was born and raised and he's back to stake out his own claim to international fame.

My Trip Down the Pink Carpet starring iconic funny man Leslie Jordan will play it's only Tennessee performance for one night only at the Michael D. Rose Theatre on the University of Memphis campus on Wed., June 4, at 8 p.m.

Rightfully claiming and honoring his heritage as a true, genteel Southerner, the Chattanooga native has made his name in the entertainment world by virtue of sheer perseverance, remarkable rebel grit — indomitable and resilient.

His efforts and fortitude have slowly but consistently been successful, enough so now that a quick reference or description of the diminutive Emmy-winning star of *Will & Grace* will bring about immediate image recognition.

Make no doubt about it...Jordan is a fast-rising, recognizable star and admittedly is hell-bent on keeping it that way.

His new work, written and adapted for the stage by Jordan himself, is currently traversing the entire North American continent with fresh, heartfelt autobiographical material that runs the gamut from A (amazing) to Z (zany).

Directed by Hollywood stage veteran David Galligan and produced by Palm Springs-based Reaction Productions, the acclaimed, versatile performer who has built his resumé predominantly in television and films, returns to the stage, having conquered the other performance mediums on the strength of his own unique character and convictions.

His adroit, one-of-a-kind Southern-branded humor and innate storytelling abilities have brought Jordan legions of new fans.

Jordan is best known for his innumerable television appearances both as a series regular and guest star. Along with his portrayal of the irascible nemesis to Karen Walker, Beverley Leslie on *Will & Grace*, he has registered memorable guest stints in an array of television's best known series such as *Boston Legal*, *Ugly Betty* and *Reba*.

Equal acclaim has come from Jordan's hilarious, poignant and humane portrayals on stage and film.

His most enduring turn as Brother Boy in the hit cult film classic *Sordid Lives* as well as his one-man autobiographical stage renderings *Like a Dog on Linoleum* and *Hysterical Blindness and other Southern Tragedies That Have Plagued My Life Thus Far* have hailed Jordan with well deserved accolades for his unique emotional voice.

2008 is shaping up to be a banner year for the comedic actor from Chattanooga. He is currently nearing completion on the initial season of his new cable series entitled *12 Miles of Bad Road*, co-starring alongside comedy genius Lily Tomlin and popular fellow Southerner Mary Kay Place.

Advance buzz on this new venture has been extraordinary. The new series completed production in Spring 2008 as he then immediately segued into preparations for the new *Pink Carpet* stage production which premiered in San Diego and will culminate in Provincetown, Mass.

It is also based upon his additional latest conquest — this time as a published author.

He took feathered plume to hand to commit to pages (and the ages), his first book titled *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet*, an autobiographical compilation of witticisms and wisdoms he has collected along his colorful life course.

The trip is saturated with star encounters as well; show biz legends Betty White, Cloris Leachman and Faye Dunaway along with contemporaries George Clooney, Megan Mulally, Delta Burke, Billy Bob Thornton, John Ritter and Robert Downey, Jr. make his written journey a true "cause celebre" and are mixed in memorably with his encounters in a colorful assortment of family, friends and bands of "gypsies, tramps and thieves" all of whom Jordan is more than willing to "Cher."

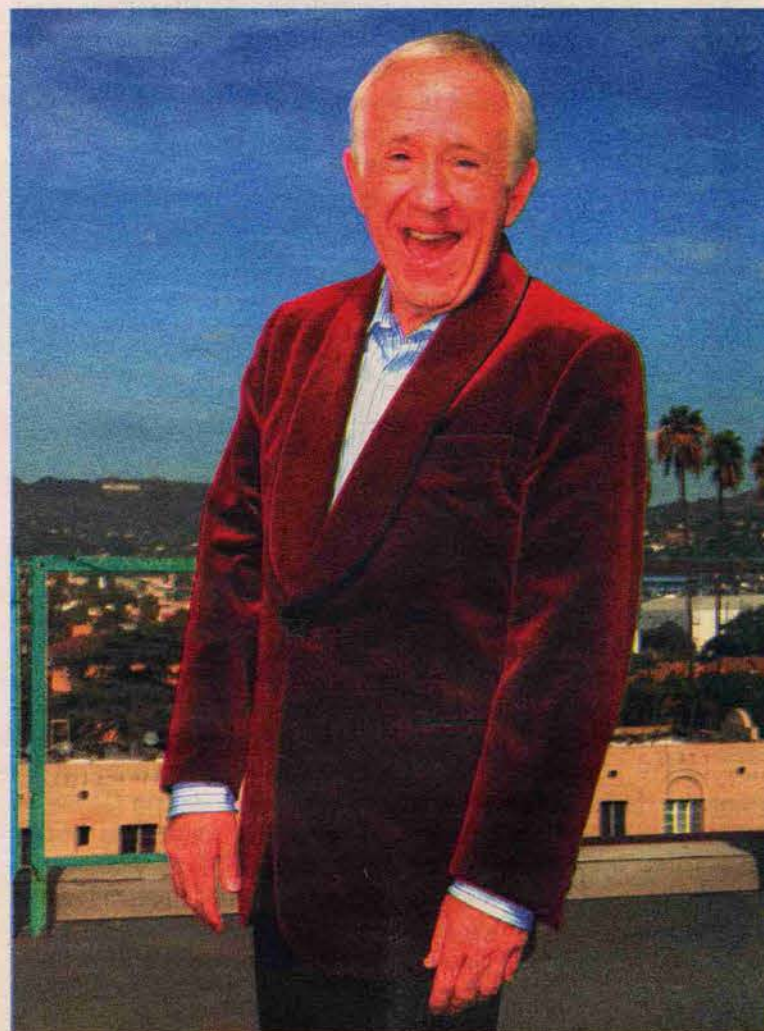
Published by Simon & Schuster, Inc., the narrative voice is unmistakable, vintage Jordan, doing what he does best; traipsing his way down the path he was destined to take, with no apologies and fewer regrets. In the process, Jordan hits more than a few potholes along the way while rendering a

life experience filled with raucous humor, wild abandon, trials and tribulations and anecdotal tidbits that are often painfully honest but forthrightly shared with the integrity only a man of his spiritually-awakened sense and resolve could possess.

Scheduled to visit 28 cities throughout North America, *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet* will continue throughout spring and early summer 2008. Playdates for the show, accompanying book signings and special appearances will include the major urban centers of America and continuing through the Heartland, the Deep South and beyond to the capitols of Canada.

Multi-media coverage of both events will roll out to full saturation pending final commitments and scheduling. Additionally, ancillary rights for the filming, electronic media and subsequent airing of *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet* are currently being negotiated.

Tickets for the Memphis stop of *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet* are available at the Michael D. Rose Theatre Box Office located at 470 University Ave. or by calling (901) 678-1735. You can also obtain them



Leslie Jordan

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Fired by the Dept. of Justice: Because of Gay Rumors?

As part of its continuing investigation into the allegations of politically motivated firings of U.S. Attorneys when the Department of Justice was headed by Alberto Gonzales, the Dept. of Justice's inspector general is looking into whether hiring and firing practices at the DOJ under Gonzales were influenced by the question of whether employees were gay or lesbian.

National Public Radio posted an Apr. 3 story at NPR's online site reporting that one prosecutor was let go despite receiving outstanding performance reviews, evidently after rumors circulated that she was a lesbian.

The investigation's personnel have received input from Dept. of Justice staffers that Leslie Hagen, who served in a liaison capacity involving Native American issues for a year, did not have her contract renewed despite unanimous scores of "Outstanding" on a Feb. 1, 2007 performance evaluation.

NPR also cited sources who indicated that Hagen had wished to stay in the position, a desire shared by Hagen's supervisors.

But even before that glowing evaluation, the NPR story reported, Hagen received word that she would not be continuing on in the position in which she had performed with such excellence: NPR reported that in October 2006, the attorney general's office let it be known that Hagen would not be offered a contract renewal.

The NPR story quoted numerous former work associates of Hagen, though Hagen herself declined to comment.

The story quoted Michigan tribal prosecutor Sarah Brubaker, who told NPR that Hagen ranked "at the very top of any of the prosecutors I've ever worked with," saying that Hagen was "not only an excellent prosecutor, but also easy to work with—personable, professional."

Tom Heffelfinger, who was at one time a U.S. Attorney for Minnesota and who brought Hagen to D.C. from Michigan, said, "I felt at the time she was the best qualified person in the nation to fill that job," reported NPR.

The DOJ's justification for not retaining Hagen was that by not renewing her contract, others would have a shot at the post. The post has remained vacant, however.

Meantime, others who also work on yearly contracts saw their contracts renewed, the story said.

The site TPMuckraker reported in an Apr. 2 story that the inspector general had been looking into the question of whether hiring and firing at the DOJ hinged at all on the sexuality of



Former U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales

employees or prospective hires.

The inspector general's staff have contacted interviewees for DOJ positions during Gonzales' tenure to determine whether they were quizzed about their sexuality as part of the application process.

One source told NPR that, to some in Gonzales' DOJ, being gay or lesbian was viewed as "even worse than being a Democrat."

Hagen, reported NPR, is a Republican.

The liaison between the DOJ and the White House, Monica Goodling, who also served Gonzalez as senior counsel, took some job responsibilities away from Hagen, reported NPR.

The NPR report said that sources felt that rumors about Hagen's sexuality were a factor in Hagen's contract not being renewed.

One source, an anonymous DOJ staffer who had been employed in the same office as Hagen, indicated that in 2006, it was disclosed at a meeting that a member of Gonzales' staff did not wish to see Hagen's contract renewed, and the implication was that Hagen's rumored sexuality was the reason.

According to the source, one attendee of the meeting asked whether sexuality was relevant to hiring and firing policies, but this did not affect the outcome.

Heffelfinger characterized Hagen's being let go as "a real loss to the Department of Justice and to the people the department serves," saying that Hagen's dismissal was "for no reason."

Hagen now works with the Office of Justice Programs and the Justice Dept. Her previous post is currently not filled.

Amaechi Spurred by Sir Ian to Come Out as Gay

Retired NBA star John Amaechi says that openly gay actor sir Ian McKellan was his inspiration for coming out the closet in his 2007 autobiography, *Man in the Middle*.

In a new interview Amaechi opens up about his experiences as a gay man playing in the homophobic world of professional sports, and about his life since retiring from the NBA in 2003.

Since his retirement Amaechi, who has a degree in psychology, has made a career for himself as a motivational speaker. He also serves as a commentator for the NBA and heads up the Amaechi Basketball Centres Foundation, a U.K. charity that provides sports opportunities for youth.

Said Amaechi of his decision to come out as a gay athlete, "I knew it would be fuss-worthy, especially in America."

Speaking about his decision to keep quiet about his sexuality prior to his retirement from pro sports, Amaechi said, "I don't want to throw it away for something that I can't help, so what I can do is control my behavior and say OK I can be lonely."

There is a cost to that strategy, though, as Amaechi pointed out, saying, "But eventually the cost of that is very skewed and you know that you're not going to play as well, you're not going to be as satisfied."

Recollecting the ferocious intensity of attention that his coming out brought to bear upon him from the American media—at one point he was interviewed more than 100 times per week—Amaechi said, "I thought it would be more negative than it was actually."

Commenting on Americans' reaction, Amaechi added, "I didn't give them enough credit. My nature is always to assume the worst, but I thought it would be a lot more bloodthirsty."

PinkNews.co.uk recounted that some of the worst response came from within the professional sports community, with comments uttered by former basketball star Tim Hardaway.

Speaking on radio, Hardaway said, "I hate gay people, so I let it be known."

Continued Hardaway, "I don't like gay people and I don't like to be around gay people."

Hardaway went on, "I'm homophobic. I don't like it."

Said Hardaway, "It shouldn't be in the world or in the United States."

Hardaway elaborated, "If you have 12 other ballplayers in your locker room that's upset and can't concentrate and always worried about him in the locker room or on

the court or whatever, it's going to be hard for your teammates to win and accept him as a teammate."

Reacting in the PinkNews.co.uk interview, Amaechi did not fault Hardaway for his words.

Said Amaechi, "What he said was the [attitude] of an awful lot of people, it's just an awful lot of people know better than to say it."

Amaechi knew that coming out would generate a sensation, and the thought almost kept him in the closet.

Said the star ballplayer, "I nearly just decided not to ever go back to America and just stay here and say 'let them froth around in their own mess,' but I went to Manchester Pride and Sir Ian McKellen was the (Grand) Marshall," he told PinkNews.co.uk.

Continued Amaechi, "I'm not very fluffy with these things and I'm quite cynical. However, the sight of him waving and looking at the reactions of people to him waving, the sight in people's eyes of 'That's Gandalf, international superstar'" had an effect on the athlete.

"I thought, obviously I am not anything like that status of superstar or even celebrity, but if on a smaller scale I could have an impact that would be a good thing," Amaechi related to PinkNews.co.uk.

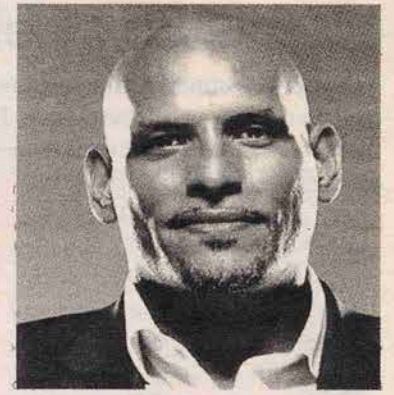
Said Amaechi, "If you were relatively stupid, and unfortunately many people are, you would imagine all gay people to be either like Graham Norton or Jack from Will and Grace, so I thought it would be quite interesting to throw something else into the mix, namely me."

As far as not coming out when he was still an active player in the NBA, Amaechi phrased his opinion plainly, citing the fact that America does a poor job of accepting and integrating GLBT people into its workforce generally.

Said Amaechi, "In 30 states in America you can be fired for being gay."

Amaechi went on, "Nobody in their logical mind would say a player with my skills, not a superstar just a good solid player, versus another solid player who's not gay, will get the job in today's world."

Moreover, being a gay player on a team of athletes means that coming out affects more than the individual who makes that decision. Said Amaechi, "There is more of a dynamic there beyond your own personality and there is a very le-



Retired NBA player John Amaechi

gitimate thing that if you are going to come out with a team, when do you do it? Do you do it before the season starts? Beginning of the season when you've won a few games? Mid-season right before the play-offs? When is the good time?"

Citing his own experience with an aroused media, Amaechi pointed out, "If an average NBA player who has been retired for three years can be an international story and certainly a national news story in America, with six months of constant comment and constant articles, what happens if a player is still playing?"

Added the athlete, "Does anybody think that wouldn't throw a team into some kind of turmoil?"

Addressing the issue of institutional homophobia in sports, Amaechi said, "A lot of people like to believe it's because these dumb urban guys can't get their minds around diversity and that's not the case."

Amaechi's coming out may not have overcome the homophobia of pro sports, but it did deal a blow to hidebound attitudes. The former player is now tackling his new career with a similar view.

"I really love to talk to people who when you walk in the door you look at them and you smile nicely, sagely and they look back at you and smile with similarly veiled contempt, knowing they are going to spend two hours hearing nothing that could possibly help them in the future," Amaechi said of his career as a motivational speaker.

"And then you blow their doors off," Amaechi continued. "I love that."

Said Amaechi, who is now pursuing his doctorate, "There is an ability, because of my playing days, because of my psychology degrees, because of my platform, to make a difference and that's what I'm doing."

Editor's Note: The web addresses in England use "co" instead of "com." Since PinkNews is located in England, the web address in the story are correct.

Gaze would love to hear from you!

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

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

Archival Flag Missing

After much searching, the MGLCC Board and I have concluded that a significant rainbow flag, long used at celebrations at MGLCC, is missing from the archives. It is a large banner with the stripes in a different order from the usual and an appliquéd pink triangle in the center.

It is believed to have been borrowed for an offsite gathering perhaps having to do with one of the previous Gaymes events and inadvertently not returned.


Anyone with knowledge of its whereabouts please get in touch with me or a board member of MGLCC. It was on loan to the archives and needs to be returned.

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"In an expanding universe, time is on the side of the outcast. Those who once inhabited the suburbs of human contempt find that without changing their address they eventually live in the metropolis."
— Quentin Crisp, *The Naked Civil Servant*

Bully

Continued from page 1

they tried to warn school officials — and then bam: the prank caller beat up Billy in the bathroom of McNair Middle School.

Not long after, a boy on the school bus pummeled Billy, but somehow Billy was the one suspended, despite his pleas that the bus's security camera would prove his innocence. Days later, Ms. Wolfe recalls, the principal summoned her, presented a box of tissues, and played the bus video that clearly showed Billy was telling the truth.

Things got worse. At Woodland Junior High School, some boys in a wood shop class goaded a bigger boy into believing that Billy had been talking trash about his mother. Billy, busy building a miniature house, didn't see it coming: the boy hit him so hard in the left cheek that he briefly lost consciousness.

Ms. Wolfe remembers the family dentist sewing up the inside of Billy's cheek, and a school official refusing to call the police, saying it looked like Billy got what he deserved. Most of all, she remembers the sight of her son.

"He kept spitting blood out," she says, the memory strong enough still to break her voice.

By now Billy feared school. Sometimes he was doubled over

with stress, asking his parents why. But it kept on coming.

In ninth grade, a couple of the same boys started a Facebook page called "Every One That Hates Billy Wolfe." It featured a photograph of Billy's face superimposed over a likeness of Peter Pan, and provided this description of its purpose: "There is no reason anyone should like billy he's a little bitch. And a homosexual that *no one likes*."

According to Alan Wilbourn, a spokesman for the school district, the principal notified the parents of the students involved after Ms. Wolfe complained, and the parents — whom he described as "horried" — took steps to have the page taken down.

Not long afterward, a student in Spanish class punched Billy so hard that when he came to, his braces were caught on the inside of his cheek.

So who is Billy Wolfe? Now 16, he likes the outdoors, racquetball and girls. For whatever reason — bullying, learning disabilities or lack of interest — his grades are poor. Some teachers think he's a sweet kid; others think he is easily distracted, occasionally disruptive, even disrespectful. He has received a few suspensions for misbehavior, though none for bullying.

Judging by school records, at least one official seems to think Billy contributes to the trouble that swirls around him. For example,

Billy and the boy who punched him at the bus stop had exchanged words and shoves a few days earlier.

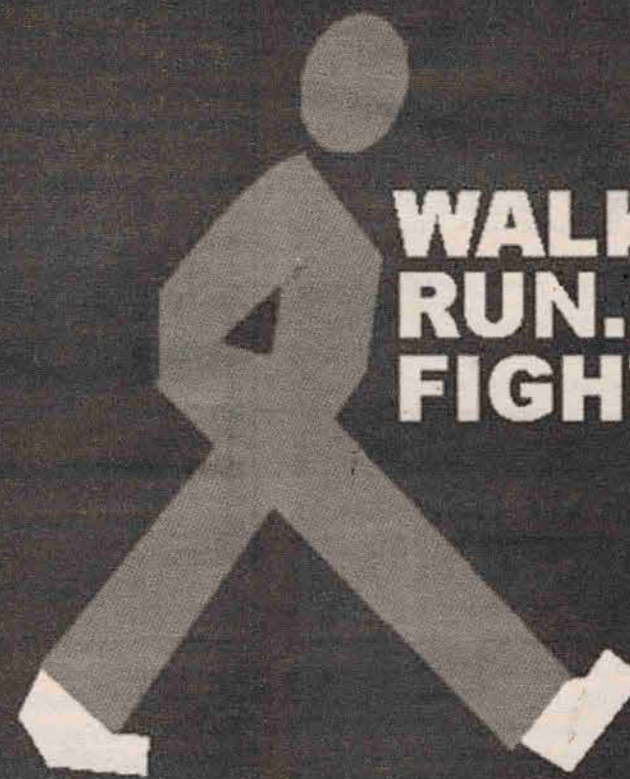
But Ms. Wolfe scoffs at the notion that her son causes or deserves the beatings he receives. She wonders why Billy is the only one getting beaten up, and why school officials are so reluctant to punish bullies and report assaults to the police.

Wilbourn said federal law protected the privacy of students, so parents of a bullied child should not assume that disciplinary action had not been taken. He also said it was left to the discretion of staff members to determine if an incident required police notification.

The Wolfes are not satisfied. This month they sued one of the bullies "and other John Does," and are considering another lawsuit against the Fayetteville School District. Their lawyer, D. Westbrook Doss Jr., said there was neither glee nor much monetary reward in suing teenagers, but a point had to be made: schoolchildren deserve to feel safe.

Billy Wolfe, for example, deserves to open his American history textbook and not find anti-Billy sentiments scrawled across the pages. But there they were, words so hurtful and foul.

The boy did what he could. "I'd put white-out on them," he says. "And if the page didn't have stuff to learn, I'd rip it out."



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Log Cabin Republicans Meet in San Diego

Repeal of the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy and the increasingly heated gay marriage debate are expected to dominate the agenda as the Log Cabin Republicans hold their national convention in San Diego.

Among the scheduled speakers to lead discussions were former U.N. Ambassador John Bolton, San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders, GOP strategist Terry Nelson, and Eric Alva, the first soldier injured in Iraq. John Bolton, an ardent McCain supporter, will lead off the discussions with a keynote address.

With the presidential race heating up, addressing core LGBT issues and the candidates should be an important part of the convention. James Vaughn, Western Region director of the Log Cabin Republicans, said he believes McCain's streak of independence may tempt voters sitting on the fence watching the Obama/Clinton rift.

"Sen. McCain's record of independence will no doubt be appealing to voters looking for an alternative to senators Clinton or Obama," Vaughn said. "We think this rift will encourage people to take a fair look at his record and his views and weigh him fairly instead of the usual knee-jerk reaction instilled by those in our com-

munity whose job it is to deliver the LGBT community to Democrats regardless of the candidate."

Both Obama and Clinton have openly supported a repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell along with many other LGBT issues, but Senator McCain, a Vietnam veteran and prisoner of war, has taken a strong stand against repeal. In a letter to the Servicemember's Defense League Network in 2007 addressing the Don't Ask Don't Tell military policy, McCain said DADT, "Unambiguously maintains that open homosexuality within the military services presents an intolerable risk to morale, cohesion and discipline."

With such a strong stance on the policy, is there a way for the Log Cabin Republicans to push the issue of the DADT repeal and gay marriage with McCain?

"We will work with the campaign and the administration to educate the senator about the real effects of the policy on service members such as some of our own

Log Cabin members," Vaughn said. "We appreciate the senator's votes and position on marriage, shared by Senator's Obama and Clinton (voting against FMA, while still personally opposing marriage) and will continue to work with him to understand the issue better."

Although California has passed many progressive LGBT-related pieces of legislation, there are still many states that have not been as liberal. Convention organizers said they intend to address all states and their current pieces of legislation regarding LGBT issues.

"We will be highlighting the possible marriage battle in California and the qualified initiative in Florida," Vaughn said. "We will be looking to help promote our own candidates running for office around the country such as John Brady running for Delaware Insurance Commissioner, to local races like Carl DeMaio running for San Diego City Council."

Log Cabin Republicans initially was founded to educate the Republican Party and Californians about Ronald Reagan's opposition to the homophobic Brigg's Initiative. Since then the organization has supported and promoted LGBT issues. Part of this convention is debating what their next move should be.

"Log Cabin isn't as active in

California because there really isn't much left to do legislatively," Vaughn said. "We've won every right and responsibility the legislature and governor can provide, other than marriage. So now in California at least, Log Cabin is debating what's next for our movement."

With the presidential race becoming more competitive, both sides of the political fence will be campaigning for the LGBT vote. According to Vaughn LGBT voters should know, Senator McCain and his "Here I am. Agree with Me or Not" slogan says "Sen. McCain is his own man and he learned that being true to his own views and not pandering after any constituency is the key to success."

Soulforce Turns 10

This spring, Soulforce celebrates 10 years of relentless nonviolent activism for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender freedom.

Ten years ago, Rev. Dr. Mel White and his partner Gary Nixon began laying the groundwork for a new social movement. Under the auspices of "Soulforce," a name adapted from the teachings of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mohandas K. Gandhi, White and Nixon began to organize lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans to study the principles of nonviolent direct action. This course of study led to the first Soulforce direct action, a historic 1999 dialogue between 200 members of Soulforce and the congregation of Jerry Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va.

As Soulforce prepares to celebrate its tenth anniversary, the landscape of religion-based bigotry is shifting.

Recent research by the Barna group suggests that young Christians are increasingly uncomfortable with church-sanctioned hostility toward LGBT people. But in spite of these positive changes, an old guard of radical right-wing or-

ganizations continues to use sexual orientation and gender identities as wedges to divide mainline denominations and our nation.

In April 2008, the Soulforce Vigil for Justice at the United Methodist General Conference will stand up to these divisive voices, encouraging the United Methodist Church to live up to its slogan "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors," by including LGBT people in marriage rites, ministry, and membership.

In fall 2008, the Third Annual Equality Ride will visit the American South. The itinerary will include seminars and several faith-based Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Through education, outreach, and direct action, these young activists will illuminate the destructive effects of religion-based bigotry and sow the seeds of a more inclusive campus culture.

A true youth movement, the Equality Ride is empowering a new generation to challenge tradition and secure a brighter future for everyone.

Gaze

Memphis GLBT Resources Directory

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

ADULT BOOKSTORES

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

BARS / RESTAURANTS

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

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

CARDS AND GIFTS

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

COMMUNITY GROUPS

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

322, Memphis 38111; Office: 685 S. Highland, 3rd Floor, Memphis 38111; ☎ 901-414-2197, Fax: 901-592-6635. Website: www.midsouthpride.org, E-mail: info@midsouthpride.org
Memphis TransGender Alliance: TV/TS support group · c/o Barbara Jean Jasen, Box 11052, Memphis, TN ☎ 38111-0052.
Mystic Krewe of Memphis United: 41 S. Century, Memphis 38111.
National Organization for Women (NOW): Box 40982, Memphis 38174, ☎ 578-3286 or e-mail at memphisnow@hotmail.com.
Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (P-FLAG): Box 172031, Memphis 38187-2031, ☎ 761-1444.
Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (P-FLAG): Jackson, TN 38305, ☎ 1-901-664-6614 for information, e-mail: burtren@aeneas.com
Tennessee Leather Tribe: Gay men's/women's leather org. 1568 Rolling Hills Dr., Memphis 38127-5409, ☎ 357-1921.
The Mid-Towners Bowling League ☎ 323-3111 - Linda 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.

"If horse racing is the sport of kings, then drag racing must be the sport of queens."

—Bert R. Sugar

Queer Notes

Political Commentary
by Jim Maynard

Two members of the Tennessee LGBT community have been selected by the Tennessee Democratic Party to be delegates to the Democratic National Convention: Sarah Kruszka of Cookeville (an at-large delegate for Barack Obama) and Dr. Marisa Richmond of Nashville (an at-large delegate pledged to Hillary Clinton). Marisa Richmond, president of the Tennessee Transgender Political Coalition, is also the first African-American transgender person selected to be a delegate from Tennessee.

The National Stonewall Democrats successfully convinced the DNC to require all state Democratic Parties to include numerical goals for LGBT delegates along with other groups. This is the first time the Tennessee Democratic Party has included such numerical goals (2) for LGBT delegates.

The newly sworn-in Democratic governor of New York, David Patterson, accepted the New York Leadership Award from the National Gay & Lesbian Task force and pledged to work to pass legislation to provide equal marriage rights for same-sex couples in New York. On the other coast, GOP California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger spoke at the annual Log Cabin Republican Convention and promised to fight an initiative to ban gay marriage in his state, which he called "a waste of time."

Schwarzenegger has vetoed legislation that would have legalized same-sex marriages, arguing that the decision should be up to voters or the courts, not the legislature. The governor was also asked to represent Republican presidential candidate John McCain, who couldn't make it to the LCR convention. (McCain seems to find a way to get to anti-gay religious right events.)

It looks like the Log Cabin Republicans will probably endorse John McCain for president, even though McCain opposes every LGBT civil rights measure supported by the Democratic candidates. McCain supports the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy which the LCR opposes and has targeted to overturn, and has refused to support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act and supported an anti-gay marriage amendment to the Arizona constitution. McCain even supports the anti-gay planks in the GOP plat-

form! So why would the Log Cabin Republicans endorse him? Good question.

The president of the LCR, Patrick Sammon, praised John McCain as being an "inclusive" Republican candidate who represents the "core principles" of the Republican Party. Would that include the principles of anti-gay Republican religious leaders Pat Robertson, Rev. John Hagee and Rev. Rod Parsely who McCain embraced as his "spiritual advisors"? The closest McCain has come to embracing LGBT rights is to support private "marriage ceremonies" for gay couples.

The drawn out Democratic primary nomination battle has kept the media spotlight off of John McCain, who continues to evade any critical scrutiny from the mainstream media. While McCain has the undeserved reputation of being a straight-talking "maverick" who stands up to "special interests," his campaign is run by lobbyists (over 59!) and he has flip-flopped on many issues: he called the Bush tax cuts "irresponsible," but now supports them; he called Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson "agents of intolerance," but now calls such agents "spiritual advisors"!

There have been some speculation and rumors that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is seeking to be John McCain's vice-president candidate. That possibility seems less likely, one hopes, with the revelation by ABC News that Rice, Cheney, Ashcroft and other top Bush administration officials actually had meetings in the White House to plan and strategize about how to get around U.S. and international laws against torture.

Former Attorney General John Ashcroft is reported as saying, "Why are we discussing this in the White House? History will not judge this kindly." Rice and the rest of the Bush administration should be tried for war crimes along with Bush and Cheney!

Probably a worse problem for Condi Rice with the Republican base are the rumors that she is a lesbian. According to a report in the *Washington Post*, Rice shared a home and bank account with another woman at Stanford, and shared the home with another Stanford professor who was openly lesbian.

The Democratic candidates continue to keep the spotlight off of John McCain and the crimes of the Bush administration by fighting each other. At this point, Hillary Clinton has already lost the nomination, but continues to try to stop Obama from getting the (her)

nomination. Obama leads Clinton in popular vote, and pledged delegates. He only needs about 30 percent of the remaining "super-delegates" to win the nomination. It's looking more and more like Hillary Clinton will do just about anything to "win."

Hillary Clinton's campaign against Obama keeps sinking to new lows. First, she tried to use Obama's former pastor Jeremiah Wright to scare white voters away from Obama. She has questioned his religious beliefs and his nationalism. She has praised John McCain's "experience" to be commander-in-chief while attacking her Democratic rival as being unqualified. (Even lying about her own "experience" involving sniper fire in Bosnia!)

Now Hillary has accused Obama of being "elitist" for saying many rural voters are "bitter" about their economic conditions and turn to religion, guns and prejudice against minorities out of frustration with political leaders who fail to keep their promises to help them. She is trying to remake herself as a gun-toting church lady to appeal to conservative voters.

I have angered gay Republicans, now it is time to anger some gay Democrats. It is time to quit worshipping at the feet of Bill and Hillary Clinton. I have defended them over and over from unfair attacks from gay Republicans. Bill Clinton was the first President and presidential candidate to speak eloquently for gay and lesbian rights. He deserves some credit, including protecting gay and lesbian employees from discrimination, and he spoke against discrimination against gays even in his State of the Union speeches. But he did throw us under the bus.

Bill Clinton broke his promises to the gay community. Yes, he was up against the opposition of not only the Republicans in Congress, the Joint Chiefs in the Pentagon, but also some conservative Democrats in Congress. Public opinion was also against him on gays in the military and gay marriage. I think the gay community also failed to organize politically. We had a big march on Washington, but did little more to change the political system or public opinion. However, I am tired of making excuses for Bill Clinton, especially after he ran ads on conservative religious radio stations bragging about his support of the Defense of Marriage Act. That was pretty low.

Even more painful, Bill Clinton advised John Kerry to support some of the anti-gay marriage amendments in 2004! It was another example of the Clinton strat-

egy of appeasing political enemies by embracing some of their issues. And Hillary Clinton is following the same strategy she helped shape in the Clinton Administration.

Hillary Clinton now claims that they supported the DOMA act to stop the anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment. Gay activist, and former Clinton supporter, David Mixner called her on this lie. The FMA had nothing to do with DOMA and was not even a serious issue at the time. Clinton supported DOMA to save his political skin. It was part of the "triangulation" strategy of Bill Clinton to co-opt Republican issues to diffuse his political opponents.

The lesson we should have learned from the failures of Bill Clinton is that we cannot wait for a "messiah" or just elect the best candidate and celebrate. We have to organize and be more politically active. Both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama support most civil rights issues for gays and lesbians. Both have spoken to LGBT groups and given interviews for the gay press. Neither supports full marriage equality for gays and lesbians.

But despite the support either

candidate gives now to LGBT rights, we will have to put constant political pressure upon them and do much more political organizing to get either of them or Democrats in Congress to stick to their promises and pass the legislation to support our rights.

I'm in love with a lesbian! I can't make it through my day without listening to Air America's rising star, lesbian Rachel Maddow. Since we lost Air America affiliate Progressive Talk 680 AM, I have to download the podcasts, which I listen to everyday at work. Maddow has been a frequent guest commentator on MSNBC and the *Keith Olbermann Show*, and has now been hired by MSNBC as a regular "political analyst"! She even stood in for Olbermann as the host of his *Countdown* program.

To my knowledge, Rachel is the only out lesbian TV political pundit! She's smart (Ph.D., Rhodes scholar!) funny and I think is as "hot" as K.D. Lang, my other lesbian love interest. Now, does that make me bisexual or are Rachel and K.D. so butch they have some sexual appeal to gay men? I guess I should "Ask Dr. Maddow"!

Mr Hyde Fashions

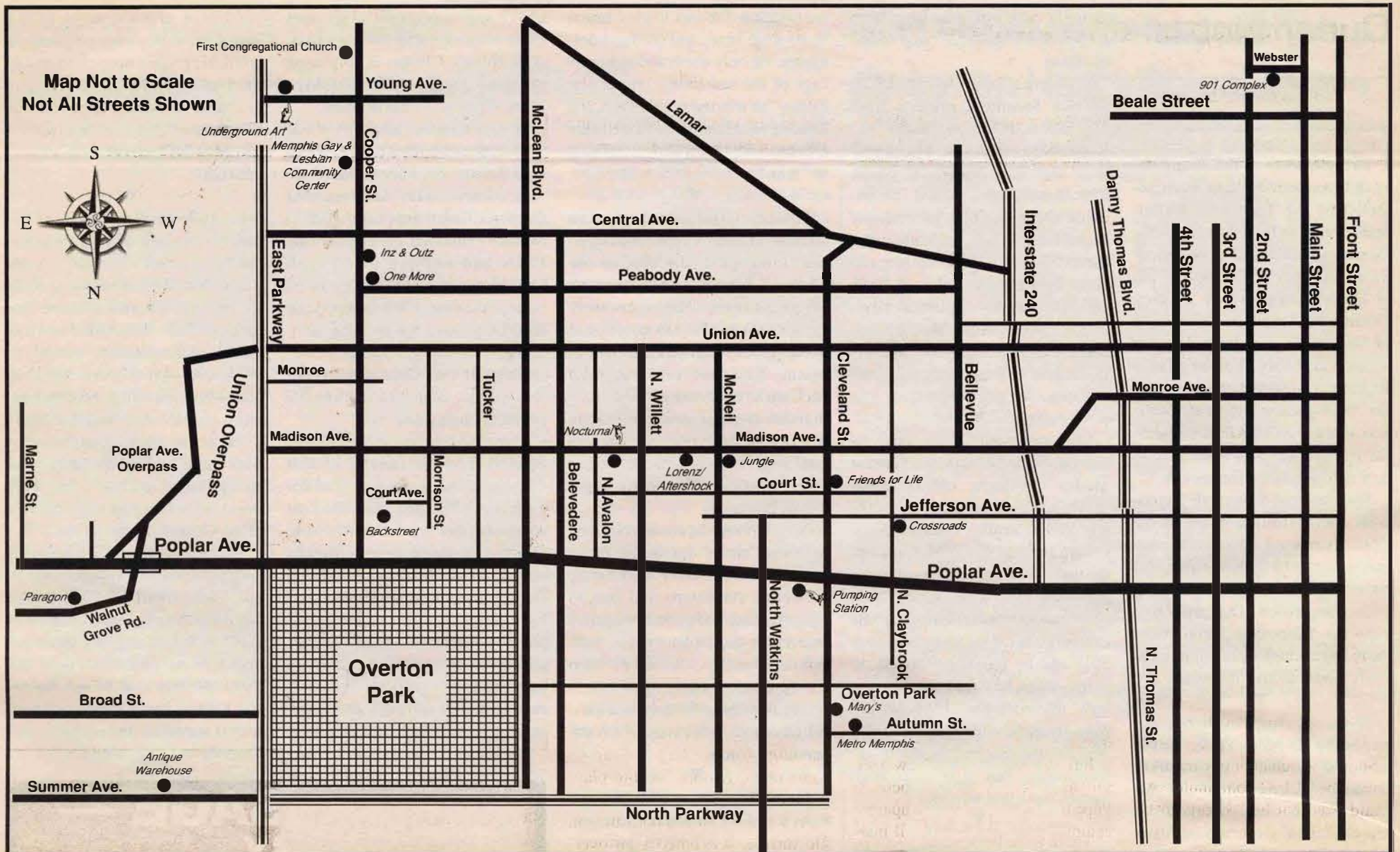
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TENNESSEE

TEP =
EQUALITY PROJECT
Shelby County Committee

Monthly Meeting
May 14, 6:30 p.m.
Quetzel (668 Union)



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Apr 20 • Stonewall Democrats 2pm, MGLCC	Apr 21 • Feast For Friends, 6:30pm, St. John's Methodist Church • Perpetual Transition, 7:30pm, MGLCC	Apr 22 • Women's Rugby Practice, 6:30pm, Audubon Park	Apr 23 • Bash Back Group, 7pm, MGLCC • Hands on Memphis Volunteer Day, 6:30pm, MGLCC	Apr 24 • Cotton Pickin' Squares, 7pm, Holy Trinity UCC • Gayme Night, MGLCC	Apr 25 • Q-Cafe, 7pm, MGLCC	Apr 26
Apr 27 • Stonewall Democrats Annual Meeting and Election, 2pm, MGLCC (postponed from Mar. 23)	Apr 28	Apr 29	Apr 30	May 1 • Cotton Pickin' Squares, 7pm, Holy Trinity UCC • PFLAG, 7 pm, Central Library, 3030 Poplar	May 2 • Q-Cafe: 7pm, MGLCC	May 3
May 4 • MGLCC Board Meeting, 1pm, MGLCC	May 5 • Feast For Friends, 6:30pm, St. John's Methodist Church	May 6	May 7 • Tennessee Equality Project monthly meeting, 6:30, Quetzal (668 Union) • Men's Potluck, 6:30pm, MGLCC	May 8 • Cotton Pickin' Squares, 7pm, Holy Trinity UCC	May 9 • Q-Cafe, 7pm, MGLCC • Gaze Ad Reservation Deadline for Mid-April edition	May 10
May 11	May 12 • Perpetual Transition, 7:30pm, MGLCC	May 13 • Mid-May Gaze Production Deadline	May 14 • Men's Potluck, 6pm, MGLCC	May 15 • Cotton Pickin' Squares, 7pm, Holy Trinity UCC	May 16 • Mid-May Gaze due out • Q-Cafe, 7pm, MGLCC	May 17 • Mirror Image Transgender Support, 7pm, Holy Trinity UCC

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