

Celebrates 5th Year

By Vincent Astor

In addition to 2008 being the 30th anniversary of the first Rainbow Flag design it will be the fifth annual Pride organized by Mid-South Pride. Pride has been celebrated every year in Memphis since 1980. The first activist march was held that June and there has been marching for most of the years since. Even without the marching, an annual celebration has taken place.

Mid-South Pride was founded in 2004. Memphis Pride, Inc. had celebrated its 10th consecutive year of planning Pride events in 2003 and chair Kay Mills had resigned following the festival after serving three years. No meetings were scheduled thereafter and phone calls to the co-chair were never returned.

Gary Wilkerson, his partner Kent Hamson, current co-chair Sean Alexander and a group of other individuals met to organize in March of 2004 in order to guarantee there would be Pride celebrations that year.

The group met, planned and worked diligently to organize the annual parade, a mini-festival and

cookout was organized by MGLCC. It was then learned that the co-chair had disbanded Memphis Pride. Other former board members of Memphis Pride cooperated in the transfer of the physical possessions of Memphis Pride to the MGLCC. Pride went on as scheduled and it was fabulous, though smaller.

During the next years, the June event continued to grow. Mid-South Pride traveled to Little Rock, and St. Louis, it hosted the Prides of the Southeast Conference with representatives from InterPride and acquired not only the Memphis Pride parade flag but a 100-foot section of the eight-stripe Sea to

See *Pride* on page 6



Whew It's Done! Just in time for Flag Day, and Gay Pride, exhausted volunteers have finished the new 100-foot rainbow flag which will debut at the Gay Pride parade on June 14. Estimated time for constructing the flag was four sessions, but extended to twice that. The new flag's design is more durable and is expected to last for at least 10 years. The piece shown is about half the flag's full length.

Cuba OKs Free Sex-changes

Cuba has authorized sex-change operations and will offer them free for qualifying citizens, an official said June 6.

The move is the latest in a series of changes implemented by President Raul Castro since he succeeded his elder brother, Fidel, in February.

Raul Castro's daughter, Mariela, heads Cuba's National Center for Sex Education, which strongly backs the new policy.

Health Minister Jose Ramon Balaguer signed a resolution approving sex-change surgery, said an official at the center who spoke on condition of anonymity because the measure has not been formally pub-

lished.

The procedure would be available to Cubans for free as part of their country's health-care system.

The sex education center has said previously that 28 transsexual Cubans have asked to undergo the surgery and that Cuban doctors have trained with physicians from Belgium to prepare for the procedures.

According to the center, a clinic for transsexual health will be created to perform the procedures, but it was not clear when it will start operating.

TBI and FBI Asked to Help Solve Warren County Gay Hate Crimes

The ACLU of Tennessee has asked the Warren County District Attorney's office to request assistance from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) in investigating hate crimes against a gay Warren County man which occurred in late May.

Neal Anthony, who has been the victim of at least three attacks on his home, remains concerned for his safety and told *Out & About* (Nashville) that he "dreads the nights and weekends" because he is afraid of another attack.

Christine P. Sun, the ACLU of Tennessee LGBT staff attorney, said, "I have been in contact with both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. The FBI has informed me that it would otherwise investigate the crimes but for the unfortunate fact that sexual orientation is not a protected characteristic under the federal hate crimes statute. The TBI has informed me that it will consider providing additional resources to investigate the hate crimes against Mr. Anthony but only if requested to do so by the Warren County District Attorney's office."

Sun has sent a letter to Warren County District Attorney Lişa Zavogiannis requesting that her office ask for assistance from the TBI and that the crimes also be reported to the FBI.

Zavogiannis's office did prosecute three teenagers who admitted to shooting more than 80 paintballs at Anthony's home, but the Juvenile Court judge who heard the case placed them on probation, ordered them to write an apology and mow yards for five weekends.

A letter that Sun sent to Warren County Sheriff Jackie Matheny asking his office to investigate the hate crimes has not gotten a response. Nor has a request from Anthony to post a reward for help in solving the crimes.

"The frequency and seriousness of the hate crimes against Mr. Anthony are of great concern to the ACLU of Tennessee," Sun said. "Tennessee state law and the con-

stitution protect Mr. Anthony."

Sun said law enforcement may not treat gay persons differently absent a legitimate state interest.

"We have been working with Mr. Anthony over the last month, and can attest to the fact that he is genuinely afraid that the hate crimes against him will continue to escalate," Sun said. "We also understand that the Sheriff's Department currently has no leads for the April 2007 spray paint attack, wherein persons covered Mr. Anthony's historic family home with anti-gay slurs such as, 'Fags deserve 2 die,' 'All gays go to hell,' and 'Queer son of bitch.' Mr. Anthony has also notified me that he has still not received a response from the Sheriff's Department concerning his proposal to offer a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the individuals responsible for the spray paint attack."

**Mid-South Pride's
Gay Pride Parade and Festival
Saturday, June 14**
Parade forms at First Congregational Church at 3 p.m.
Parade steps off at 4 p.m. and proceeds down Cooper St.
to the Festival site at Peabody Park.

HRC Endorses Obama for President

"Senator Obama has consistently shown that he understands, as we do, that, GLBT rights are civil rights and human rights," says HRC President Joe Solmonese

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender civil rights group, has announced that the organization will endorse Senator Barack Obama (D-Ill.) for president of the United States. The decision was made by the HRC board of directors based on Senator Obama's support for GLBT equality, his demonstrated leadership and his unwavering commitment to civil rights.

"HRC is proud to throw our full support behind Senator Obama's presidential campaign," said HRC President Joe Solmonese. "Senator Obama has consistently shown that he understands, as we do, that, GLBT rights are civil rights and human rights. Senator Obama has said that embracing 'our gay brothers and sisters' is true to Martin Luther King's vision; I know that Senator Obama's vision is one of equality, fairness and justice for all of us," he said. "We have just witnessed a historic primary contest in which two champions of our community demonstrated that they hear our voices and share our dreams. For millions across this country, their candidacies as the first woman and the first African American to be top contenders for the nomination of a major party have already been life-changing, inspiring and groundbreaking.

Senators Obama and Clinton both remained our allies whether they were campaigning in New Mexico or Nebraska; in California or Kansas. They are, quite simply, heroes to anyone fighting for equality."

Senator Obama supports federal benefits and protections for same-sex couples, a fully-inclusive Employment Non-Discrimi-

nation Act and hate crimes legislation, comprehensive sex education, the repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, and increased funding for HIV/AIDS. He opposes the federal marriage amendment and bans on adoption by GLBT people. Senator Obama participated in HRC's and Logo's historic presidential forum in 2007, and submitted

HRC's presidential questionnaire.

"The Human Rights Campaign has been at the forefront of the fight for GLBT equality and opportunity, and I am proud to have its endorsement," said Senator Obama. "Too often, the issue of GLBT rights is exploited by those seeking to divide us. But at its core, this issue is about who we are as Americans. I look forward to working with HRC to end discrimination against GLBT Americans and to ensure that all of our

citizens are treated with dignity and respect."

Solmonese concluded, "I've been consistently impressed by Senator Obama's willingness to speak about GLBT issues in front of diverse audiences. Matters of life and livelihood for GLBT Americans are on the line in this election and after eight years of an anti-gay stranglehold on the presidency, Sen. Obama's message of fairness and acceptance is a breath of fresh air."

Obama Issues Statement on LGBT Pride Month

Senator Barack Obama has released the following statement commemorating Pride month:

"I am proud to join with our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered brothers and sisters in celebrating the accomplishments, the lives, and the families of all LGBT people during this Pride season. Too often, the issue of LGBT rights is exploited by those seeking to divide us. But at its core, this issue is about who we are as Americans.

"It's time to live up to our founding promise of equality by treating all our citizens with dig-

nity and respect. Let's enact federal civil rights legislation to outlaw hate crimes and protect workers against discrimination based upon sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. Let's repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell and demonstrate that the most effective and professional military in the world is open to all Americans who are ready and willing to serve our country. Let's treat the relationships and the families of LGBT Americans with full equal-

ity under the law.

"We are ready to accomplish these goals because of the courage and persistence of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who are working every day to achieve equal rights. The gay couple who demand equal treatment in our family laws as they raise their children; the lesbian soldier who wants nothing more than to serve her country openly and honestly; the transgender workers who asks for the simple dignity of being judged

by the quality of their work. Generations of LGBT Americans, at once ordinary and extraordinary, have made possible this moment in our history. With leadership and hard work, we can fulfill the promise of equality for all."

The Obama for America campaign is proud to be actively participating in over 60 local and state wide Pride events over the summer. To find the events nearest you visit www.pride.barackobama.com/pridemonth.

Democrats Issue 2008 PRIDE Proclamation

Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean June 3 joined Massachusetts Democratic Representative Barney Frank and Wisconsin Democratic Representative Tammy Baldwin in issuing the following Proclamation marking PRIDE Month:

"Today, on behalf of Democrats across America, we join together in celebrating the contributions that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and

transgender Americans and their families make to our society and reaffirm our party's commitment to promoting full equality under the law for every American.

"As leaders of the Democratic Party, we stand proudly with the LGBT community and commit ourselves to working together to build an America that is truly inclusive. Every American has the right to live in dignity, with equal rights, responsibilities and protections under the law. These are our country's and our party's core values. Across the country, at every level of government, Democrats have championed sweeping protections in the areas of employment, housing, domestic partnerships and civil unions, adoption, gender iden-

tity or expression, and hate crimes.

"Despite all we have accomplished, our work is not done. We need to fight efforts to write discrimination into our laws and constitutions. We need to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, pass the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Act, and repeal 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' We need a comprehensive, science-based strategy for combating HIV/AIDS. We must address the socioeconomic problems, including poverty and limited access to health care, that increase vulnerability to this disease.

"To do all of these things we need to put a Democrat in the White House, expand our majorities in Congress, and elect more Democrats at the local and state level across the country. To do that, we need you. Get active, get involved, and join us so we can take our country back."

"If gay and lesbian people are given civil rights, then everyone will want them!"
- Author unknown

HRC PAC Releases Report on McCain's Record on GLBT Issues

The Human Rights Campaign PAC, the federal political action committee of the nation's largest gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization, announced the release of a comprehensive report June 3 – "Senator John McCain: A Record of Opposing the Interests of GLBT Americans."

As the general election nears, Sen. John McCain will tout his reputation as a maverick; an independent and a moderate, but a review of Sen. McCain's record paints a different picture. The report provides an in-depth view of Sen. John McCain's record on GLBT issues and the likelihood that a McCain presidency would be similar to that of President George W. Bush. The full report and a summary can be viewed online at www.hrc.org/McCain.

"We've witnessed President Bush over the last seven years repeatedly side with ultra-conservatives and the religious right at the expense of protections for GLBT Americans. Judging by his record, a McCain presidency would be another four years of more of the same," said Human Rights Campaign Vice President David Smith.

"Similar to Bush, Sen. John McCain opposes equal benefits for same-sex couples; opposes the Employment Non-Discrimination Act to prohibit discrimination against GLBT Americans in the workplace; opposes expanding the hate crimes act to include sexual orientation and gender identity and supports the military's discriminatory Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy."

"Sen. McCain voted against the Federal Marriage Amendment, which would have rewritten discrimination into our Constitution, but his position on equality for same-sex couples is no different than that of President Bush and the conservative right," said Arizona State Legislator Kyrsten Sinema, who serves on the HRC Arizona Steering Committee and previously directed Arizona Together, the group responsible for defeating the 2006 Arizona constitutional amendment against marriage equality.

"The same year Sen. McCain voted against the FMA, he worked to oppose equal rights in his home state of Arizona by appearing in a television advertisement in support of a constitutional amendment that not only would have banned same-sex marriage, but also would have taken away existing benefits and legal protections for unmarried

families."

In 2006, voters in Arizona were faced with a vote on Proposition 107 — an amendment to the Arizona Constitution that prohibited any form of relationship recognition. To view the television advertisement showing McCain voicing support for the amendment, visit the HRC blog: <http://www.hrcbackstory.org/>.

Highlights from "Senator John McCain: A Record of Opposing the Interests of GLBT Americans":

Opposed Ending Discrimination Against GLBT Americans in the Workplace. Senator McCain cast a deciding vote against the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

Opposed Protecting GLBT Americans from Hate Crimes. Senator McCain voted three times against expanding the federal hate crimes law to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

Proponent of Discriminatory Military Policy. Senator McCain supports Don't Ask, Don't Tell and does not believe that gays should serve in the military.

Opponent of Equal Benefits for Same-Sex Couples. Senator McCain voted for the Defense of Marriage Act which prohibits same-sex couples from receiving federal rights and benefits in any state.

Actively Supported State Ban on Domestic Partnerships. Senator McCain campaigned for a ban on same-sex relationship recognition in his home state of Arizona — even appearing in a campaign television ad.

Supported the Confirmation of Anti-GLBT Equality Judges. Senator McCain voted to confirm President Bush's judicial nominees who had taken anti-GLBT positions. He has pointed to Justice Samuel Alito as a role model for future Supreme Court appointments.

Supported a Discriminatory HIV/AIDS Policy. Senator McCain supported a Jesse Helms strategy to cut off funding for prevention efforts aimed at the gay community and voted to prohibit foreign nationals with HIV from immigrating to the United States.

Bishop Gene Robinson Marries Gay Partner

Bishop Gene Robinson, the first openly homosexual Anglican bishop, has "married" his partner, further inflaming tensions in the church ahead of a series of critical meetings this summer.

Bishop Gene Robinson wants his partner to have more rights in case he gets murdered

The bishop, whose appointment has driven the worldwide church to the brink of collapse, had a civil union with his partner of 20 years, Mark Andrew.

They had a private ceremony carried out by a lawyer in front of family and friends on Sat., June 7, followed by a service of celebration in a church nearby in New Hampshire.

Prior to the event, Bishop Robinson, who recently claimed he had always wanted to be a "June bride," said: "We're very excited about it. It won't look like a wedding, but it will be wonderful."

He has been accused of staging the event just before a number of critically important Anglican summits in a bid to embarrass church leaders, who have not invited him to the once-a-decade Lambeth Conference because of the furor surrounding his sexuality.

But Bishop Robinson still plans to attend fringe events at the conference in Canterbury in July, and told the *Telegraph* the civil union is taking place now so that his partner will have more legal rights in case he is murdered by homophobic extremists at Lambeth.

He believes his life may be in danger as he has already received death threats, and has arranged to have security staff guarding him.

"I have had two threats of violence on our home answerphone, saying that I should stay away from Lambeth. There are lots of crazy people in the world who do crazy things," he said.

"I'm not willing to travel to Lambeth and put my life in danger without putting protection in place for my partner.

"If something were to happen to me, my partner would otherwise be treated as a complete stranger by the authorities. He would have no say over medical issues and if a body has to be claimed, he would have no right to do that."

He added: "I don't want to be a martyr — I just want to be a bishop."

The 61-year-old, who was made Bishop of New Hampshire five years ago, hopes to meet church leaders at Lambeth who want to discuss the divisive issue of homosexuality with him.

He believes homosexuality is widespread within Anglicanism, and that the threat of schism could be averted if the church were more honest about its extent.

Bishop Robinson, who spoke at

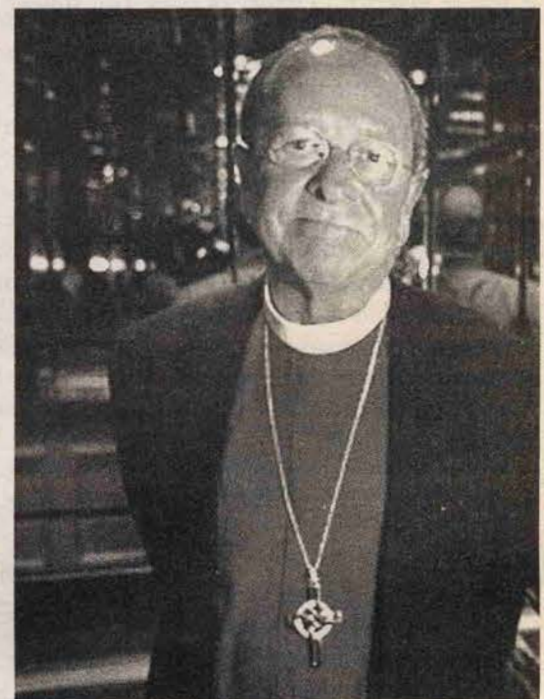
the arts festival in Hay-on-Wye in May, said: "One thing that would help is if we could be more honest about our practices. Everyone knows we have gay clergy, gay bishops. I've probably met 300 gay clergy in the Church of England."

He went on: "Many congregations know their clergy is gay but there's a quiet agreement not to talk about it.

"There's the old adage that we should practice what we preach, but maybe we should reverse that to say we should preach what we practice."

Bishop Robinson said it would help if more homosexual clergy publicly disclosed their orientation but does not want to "out" those whom he knows.

"It feels a little bit lonely out here by myself. But coming out is a very



Bishop Gene Robinson

personal decision."

He still believes the threat of a complete split within the church can be averted, despite the anger and resentment towards homosexuality from some bishops.

"We can't choose our family — we are all brothers and sisters in Christ and our task is to learn to live together."



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A Series of Unstoppable Events: The Fight for Gay Marriage Begins ...

The world, as some have known it, is crumbling. Not a little, but dramatically. Not only is there marriage equality in Massachusetts but by June 16, there will be marriage equality in California. And if you're married in either of those two states? Gov. David Patterson of New York says, "You will be acknowledged and welcome here."

Commentary by Sara Whitman
Gaywired.com

It's amazing to see change spreading across the country. The Supreme Court in Connecticut is about to rule on the availability of marriage to all its residents. There are plenty of progressive governors across the country that might be brave enough to follow David Patterson's example.

It is a series of unstoppable events.

There will be more lawsuits, more push back from the conservative right wing states — we're already seeing some of this with a motion to get gay marriage banned in California once again landing on the books for November — and there will be expensive battles over the decisions.

The truth is the game is over. They failed in Massachusetts when three-fourths of the legislators — that is way more than a simple majority — voted down a ballot initiative.

It's wrong to vote on rights was

the message.

It is wrong to put minority rights on a popular ballot. Most of us made it out of high school alive — although not all of us — and I think it's time to have our rights based on the fact that we're all tax paying citizens of this country.

Not on some lunatic fringe who wave bibles as a reason to hate. To them I only have to say, "Jesus would be so ashamed. Not to mention, he'd be on our side."

The very bedrock of the belief system that there are some who are more right, some who are more perfect to procreate, some who are better fit to promote the interests of our society is being dismantled.

The new, young voting generation about to take their first stab at electing a president finds the discussion silly. The older populations of "traditional marriage" folks are finding their base diminishing.

Quickly.

It's why the fight will be so intense over the next few years. In California, people will be getting married starting June 17th. In the fall, we'll fight to defeat the ballot

initiative which threatens to take those rights away.

A phenomenal waste of money during a time when schools don't have enough resources to educate our children and veterans are relying on volunteers to help them transition back from the war as there is no money to pay for extended therapy. Not to mention our crumbling economy is creating more and more need for social services on all levels.

The fight will go on but the argument about "the bedrock of society crumbling" sounds more and more ridiculous as time goes on. We've enjoyed marriage equality in Massachusetts for four years. There are no more divorces today

than there were before. There has not been a mass migration to marry someone of the same sex by people who were before heterosexual.

The reality is we marry. We divorce. We have families whether or not some preacher distorting the bible into a weapon likes us. We love. We fight. We are good parents. We are bad parents.

Because we are human.

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled on Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, starting a series of events that could not be stopped by those who hated based on the color of skin. They could not make Rosa Parks sit in the back of the bus, they could not stop the Voting Rights Act, and they could

not stop the change in front of them.

Whether you look to the Stonewall Riots or the more recent ruling by the Massachusetts Supreme Court on Goodridge vs. The Department of Public Health, change cannot be stopped. And like the Brown case, it is about more than marriage rights. It is about human rights. It is about equality on every level.

Marriage is just one step. We need equal rights. All of them. Not special rights, but equal rights. And we will continue to fight, state-by-state, law-by-law.

Because ultimately treating us as equal citizens, with dignity and respect, only strengthens the bedrock of society.

Gay Marriage Ruling Has Roots in Landmark Race-based Case

The California Supreme Court's historic ruling legalizing gay marriage has its roots in the case of a Mexican American woman who 60 years ago fought for the right to marry an African American man.

Andrea Perez and Sylvester Davis were denied a marriage license in Los Angeles County because state law at the time banned interracial unions. So Perez took her case to the California Supreme Court.

In October 1948 judges struck down California's anti-miscegenation law, which had stated: "All

marriages of white persons with negroes, Mongolians, members of the Malay race, or mulattoes are illegal and void."

On May 20, state Chief Justice Ron George, in his majority opinion, cited "this court's landmark decision 60 years ago" in the Perez case, which upheld "the fundamental constitutional right to marry"

regardless of race.

George noted that the court didn't just strike down laws against interracial marriage that had existed since statehood. The Perez decision focused on "the importance to an individual of the freedom 'to join in marriage with the person of one's choice.'"

Experts See Windfall From Marriage Ruling

The state Supreme Court's ruling in favor of gay marriage is not only a boon for same-sex couples. The decision is also seen as an economic windfall for government coffers, tourism destinations, and all manner of businesses catering to wedding needs, from formalwear designers and planners to jewelers and florists.

Just how significant is the court's historic ruling to the state's economy and tourism trade? Eleven minutes after the decision was posted to the court's Website Thurs., May 15, the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau zapped reporters with a press release hailing the justices' 4-3 ruling.

The statement was one of, if not the, first to be sent out. In it, SFCVB President and CEO Joe

courage visitors to celebrate the freedom to marry in San Francisco — where LGBT history continues to be made."

As the state grapples with a \$17 billion budget deficit, it also came as no surprise to see Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger issue a statement — also within minutes of

the court's ruling being announced — saying that he would uphold the court's decision. On average nationally, people spend about \$25,000 on their weddings and a portion of that cost goes toward paying taxes to the state and local government coffers.

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Steve Solomon

The Gay Marriage Race: Which State Will Be Next?

Whither California, the nation? That's the question LGBT activists and just-plain folks across the country are asking. Will legalizing marriage in the California Republic set off a wave of such actions across the country? Judging from what happened in New York, it may already have. EDGE analyzes the move toward (and away from) gay marriage state by state and handicaps the race to be next in line to the altar.

When California's highest court ruled in May that gay marriage was legal in the state, it put in motion what is expected to be a stampede of couples from other states. Indeed, there have been several articles about businesses rubbing their hands with glee over the out-of-state dollars the decision will bring into a depressed local economy.

Even with the damper put on the festivities by the approval of a ballot initiative to annul the decision, the months between June and November, when it comes before voters, will see thousands of same sex couples from across the nation traveling to California and utilize the benefits of the State Supreme Court ruling.

The reason is simple: California, unlike Massachusetts, is the first state to allow couples from other states to come there and take advantage of the landmark ruling's benefits and return home. In most cases, at least for now, the certificate they hold will only convey local or symbolic benefits.

Despite that major caveat, in mid June, local officials throughout the state will begin issuing marriage licenses to same sex couples from anywhere. That in itself will perhaps inspire a brand new gay meaning to "California Dreaming" all across the land.

"I wouldn't be surprised to see 10, 20 maybe up to 30 thousand couples traveling here between June and November," said Brad Sears, executive director at the Williams Institute at UCLA. That's a lot of floral arrangements and honeymoon suites. "The vast majority will return to states that don't recognize their marriage," he added.

Still, shortly after the California Supreme court decision, on the other side of the country in the nation's second-most populous state, New York, LGBT ally Governor David Paterson instructed all state agencies to recognize same sex marriages from other states as valid. Paterson's unprecedented action, which is being challenged in court by religious groups and some GOP legislators, adds yet another nugget of hope and some bi-coastal headway into the complicated horse race to eventual full mar-

riage equality in the United States.

LGBT celebratory bells and whistles over the May California Supreme court decision were due in large part to the landmark and bellwether nature of a decision coming from the country's exporter of American culture and social mores. Many activists and supporters of marriage equality are now saying that the court ruling's impact could be several fold.

First, California courts have a heavy influence on other state courts and legislative bodies. Perhaps more importantly, it may change public opinion to an acceptance of the inevitability of gay marriage, no matter how begrudging.

All agree, the road to full marriage equality will be a yearlong process that follows a map of state-by-state activism and struggle. Eventually, the courts will pass it off to an eventual federal solution-provided fast-evolving public opinion in our favor prevails in the ballot box.

"The thing that could really bring uniformity to this issue is that the United States Supreme Court would decide that its against the federal constitution that marriage is restricted to just men and women," Sears pointed out.

But Sears cautions that he does not see that national victory line being crossed anytime soon.

"I don't see that happening without there first being a lot of court and legislative development on the state level," he said. "The court tends to first take the temperature of the states on social issues. Look at when they (the court) said sodomy laws were unconstitutional."

"At the time of the 1986 Bowers vs. Hardwick case, about half the states still had sodomy laws and the national court ruled that sodomy laws were still constitutional."

But by the time of the landmark 2003 Lawrence vs. Texas case, when the court revisited the issue, only 13 states had sodomy laws. The court then ruled them unconstitutional. Sears sees the marriage process going on for three to five years before the Supreme Court tackles it.

Joy, Resentment, Questions Follow NY Gay Rights Decree; Governor Rejects Criticism

On May 19, 2004, Tanya Wexler and Amy Zimmerman, after being together almost 13 years, were married in a small town north of Boston. Four hours later they were back in their Greenwich Village home and, as far as New York state was concerned, the wedding never happened.

That changed May 28 when New York Gov. David Paterson directed state agencies to make sure same-sex couples are provided as many as 1,300 benefits and rights afforded to married heterosexual couples. They include collecting health and pension benefits, being admitted as "close family" in a hospital room and transferring a business license.

"We learned about it when we picked up our paper this morning on the front stoop," said Zimmerman, who with Wexler, a 37-year-old film director, have four children ages 2 to 8. They rushed to their breakfast table to read the article, then tried to explain it to Jerry, Ella, Ruby and Violet.

"It was just a great conversation for us to have," said Zimmerman, 35. "They definitely understand what's fair and not fair and definitely understand their family isn't being treated the same way as their friends' families."

For them, Paterson's two-page memo featured in news accounts nationwide is a manifesto.

Others, New York's Catholic bishops among them, see it as an assault on the family, and a big foot in the door toward legalizing gay marriage in New York.

"The definition of marriage predates recorded history," argued New York State Catholic Conference Executive Director Richard E. Barnes. "No single politician or court or legislature should attempt to redefine the very building block of our society in a way that alters its entire meaning and purpose."

Still, Paterson, a Roman Catholic, defended his action by trying to downplay its magnitude. He said not only is his decision supported by long-standing civil rights law, but failure to act would expose the state to litigation if it didn't recognize other states' marriages for all.

"We have a time-held and time-tested tradition honoring those marital rights," Paterson said at a Manhattan news conference. "I am taking the same approach that this state always has with respect to out-of-state or marriages conducted in foreign governments being recognized here in the state of New York. I am following the law as it has always existed."

Paterson, long a supporter of same-sex marriage, rebuked critics who claimed he crossed the constitution — "they should get a little better informed" — and Republican lawmakers who said he over-



Tanya Wexler, right, and Amy Zimmerman, left

stepped his bounds — they should go into session and "do something."

"As far as I'm concerned, I think it's beautiful," Paterson said.

Neighboring Massachusetts is the only U.S. state that recognizes same-sex marriage, but its residency requirements bar New Yorkers from marrying there. California may follow in June. Canada is among the nations where gay marriage is legal.

Even the state's biggest gay lobby, the Empire State Pride Agenda, is trying to figure out exactly what Paterson's directive will do in New York, and if it will survive a possible challenge in the state's highest court.

The organization said the directive will likely be felt in clarifying a surviving same-sex spouse's rights in the state workers' compensation program; inheritance of vending, commercial fishing and

other commercial licenses; tax breaks on property transfers and jointly filed income tax returns; and conflict-of-interest provisions that prevent spouses from certain activities in regulated businesses like banking and lobbying.

Politically, Paterson's directive was a strong return to his liberal base after spending the first nine weeks of his time in office staking out a claim as a fiscal conservative. And he boosted the left with a measure that he says won't cost the state any money.

Timing also played a role.

On May 28, California's state government issued a directive that effective June 17 same-sex couples could be legally wed in that state. Hours later, Paterson's office, led by his openly gay chief of staff, Charles J. O'Byrne, released their own memo to agency heads.

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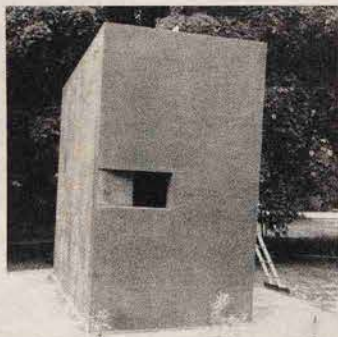
MPHS, ARK, MS GAYS, seeking GWMs 40-60 for discreet friendship. I tried cellular phone (not good), so I'm trying my address: 1701 North Avalon St., Apt. 128, West Memphis, Ark. 72301. J Pilkington.

Berlin Unveils Monument for Gay Holocaust Victims

The monument is located in Berlin's central Tiergarten park across from the Memorial to Murdered Jews of Europe.

The monument is described as a pillar, 11.8 feet high and 6.2 feet wide.

One side of the monument has a window/portal through which one can view a video screen. The video is a one-and-a-half minute loop. It was made on the same spot where the monument stands and shows two men in a passionate kiss.



Philadelphia Boy Scouts File Lawsuit To Halt Eviction

A local Boy Scouts chapter embroiled in a battle over gay rights is suing the city of Philadelphia to avoid eviction from its headquarters.

The federal lawsuit seeks to stop the city from evicting the Scouts or from charging the group about \$200,000 a year in rent. The Scouts currently pay \$1 annually for the space.

The city says it cannot keep subsidizing the rent of a private group that discriminates. It gave the Scouts until May 30 to revise their policy or pay rent.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2000 that the Boy Scouts, as a private group, have a First Amendment right to bar gays.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

The Philadelphia chapter adopted a nondiscrimination policy in 2003, but was ordered to revoke it by the National Council.

Pride

Continued from page 1

Sea Flag and a reputation for high class events.

The profile of the Mid-South Pride board members is very high in groups and organizations around the city and the surrounding region. The Pride Festival returned and continues to grow. Cooperative events with Outflux and MGLCC have been organized and over the last two years a connection with QBliss, a national GLBTI supportive media organization, resulted in awards for Mid-South Pride leaders and a 2008 Pride lineup better than ever before.

Gary Wilkerson died unexpect-

edly in September of 2007 leaving a very large act to follow. The replacement for Memphis Pride's Parade Flag is dedicated to his memory and the creation by QBliss of the Gary Wilkerson Visionary Leadership Award is a direct result of his influence. The QBliss GLBTI Creating Change Community Awards will be distributed at the 2008 Festival in Memphis. The legacy of all the leaders and volunteers of the organizations who have kept Pride celebrations viable and alive in Memphis will continue.

For information on all of this year's events, visit www.midsouthpride.org and for information on the awards visit www.qbliss.net.

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Birmingham Mayor First Denies Gay Parade Permit, Then Agrees After Prodding

Birmingham Mayor Larry Langford wouldn't sign a proclamation for an annual gay pride celebration or allow banners on city property, and said he would not grant the sponsoring group a parade permit.

Langford said he first turned down the requests from Central Alabama Pride because it is inappropriate for government to endorse a lifestyle.

"My policy is don't ask because it's not my business, and don't put me in the position to make it my business," Langford said. "I don't condone it, but I also am not sitting in judgment on anyone."

Still Langford's stance angered some members of the city's gay community.

"It doesn't hurt my feelings, because we're not politically on the same page. I'm offended more so," said Ronald Simoneau, a participant in the parade since 1989. "It's a slap in the face to the gay community, to just shrug us off like we're not important."

He said he learned of the mayor's decision in an e-mail sent to an

event organizer.

Simoneau, also known as "Libertee Belle," said past mayors have signed the proclamation and allowed the parade. Refusing such an innocuous request sends a message of intolerance to a significant population of the city, he said.

"I did the first gay pride march in 1989," Simoneau said "At that time, even the police were a little worried then, but we've never had a problem at all."

Langford cited his support for increased funding for AIDS outreach programs and a nondiscriminatory hiring policy as evidence of his fair treatment of all people.

"I don't think I'm intolerant, I just don't condone the lifestyle," he said. "Your personal lifestyle should be nobody's issue but yours. It's not a civil rights issue, it's a personal choice issue."

In addition, Langford said anyone familiar with his personality and religious views should not be surprised by the denial.

"I'm not going to endorse, condone or condemn anybody," he said. "I'm just not going to sign the proclamation."

A gay pride parade planned for June 7 on Southside went on as planned, according to state Rep. Patricia Todd. Todd said she spoke to Mayor Larry Langford and he assured her a parade permit would be granted from the city.

The 20th Gay Pride Parade, sponsored by Central Alabama Pride, was held June 7 in Five Points South. The parade was part of the annual Pride Week celebration.

Todd said the mayor also agreed to meet with leaders of the gay community.

Virginia Supreme Court Affirms Custody Case Ruling Favoring Lesbian Mother

On June 6, the Virginia Supreme Court affirmed a prior ruling by the Virginia Court of Appeals that said that the state must honor the Vermont Supreme Court's order of visitation between Janet Jenkins and her daughter.

"We are thrilled for Janet—at the end of the day this case is about being a mother to her daughter," said Greg Nevins, senior staff attorney at Lambda Legal. "The Virginia Supreme Court's decision upheld the law and we are extremely pleased."

Janet Jenkins (formerly Miller-Jenkins) and Lisa Miller (formerly Miller-Jenkins) were joined in a civil union in Vermont and thereafter had a child.

After the women ended their relationship, Miller moved to Virginia with the women's daughter, and asked a Vermont court to dis-

solve the couple's civil union and sort out custody of the child.

When the Vermont court ordered visitation for Jenkins, Miller filed a new lawsuit in a Virginia court, using that state's antigay marriage law to have herself declared the child's sole legal parent.

The conflicting court orders — one from Vermont ordering regular visitation for Jenkins, and the other from a lower court in Virginia naming Miller as the sole parent — led to a decision by the Virginia Court of Appeals that the lower court in Virginia was wrong to contradict the Vermont court order

granting Janet Jenkins visitation rights.

A few months later, the Virginia Court of Appeals, based on its earlier decision, reiterated that Virginia must enforce the Vermont court order. Lisa Miller appealed that decision to the Virginia Supreme Court resulting in the June 6 decision.

"I'm relieved that this tug of war with my daughter is over," said Janet Jenkins. "This has been a very long four years. My daughter and I need some time to be together — she needs her other mom."

Jenkins' legal team argued that the federal Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act and Virginia's Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act make it clear that the Vermont court alone has jurisdiction in the matter and cannot be interfered with. Furthermore, the federal kidnapping law (PKPA) requires that the Vermont order be enforced in Virginia.

Greg Nevins, Senior Staff Attorney in Lambda Legal's Southern Regional Office in Atlanta is handling the case for Lambda Legal along with co-counsel Rebecca Glendberg of the ACLU of Virginia and Joseph Price of the law firm Arent Fox LLP who argued the case on behalf of Jenkins.

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Mid-South Pride Flag Designer Thanks Volunteers

When the board of Mid-South Pride announced to a small group of students at Rhodes College that they were naming me a grand marshal of this year's Gay Pride parade, they totally caught me off guard.

Commentary by Mike Morgan,

Yes, I was quite flattered and accepted without hesitation, yet I could not help but think how surreal the whole idea was that I'd just moved back to Memphis a year earlier after nearly 10 years away and hardly considered myself worthy of such an honor for such a little amount of time and effort.

In reality, it was no small effort. I cannot possibly take the credit without thanking the many people and organizations who helped build this new flag.

First, I would like to thank Vincent Astor who told me almost a year ago of the need for a new flag and the tattered state of the old one which has held up admirably for 10 years. He said he would like to see a new one built that would be a replica of the old one and would honor Gary Wilkerson (whom I regrettably never met, but truly wish I had based on the many things I've heard).

Many people have questioned the choice of cotton as the primary material and the answer has always been that it was the closest

match to the old material and that cotton being organic is the least abrasive fabric to touch and handle in addition to its rich color saturation. It should also be mentioned that cotton has deep roots in this community, and Memphis owes its very foundation to the cotton industry.

Inz and Outz, Tennessee Equality Project and the Nike Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender and Friends Network as corporate sponsors should all be thanked for their generous contributions that made this flag possible.

I would like to extend a personal thank you to First Congregational Church which provided us with a large, safe space through months of snow, sleet and thunderstorms starting in February and going into May while we worked on this project.

Vincent, being the tireless trooper and rallying community activist that he is, arranged the space and time with First Congo and spearheaded the recruitment of the volunteers whose efforts were no less important than those previously mentioned.

The first of them I would like to mention is Miki Zulewski and her

partner BJ Massengale who spent nearly as much time and effort as anyone schlepping their equipment to the church and sewing the five miles or so of thread that went into this project.

All of the Mid South Pride board members, Sean Alexander, Kent Hamson, Scott Miller and Bailey, Vanna, Donna, Gary's mother Elizabeth, my mother Ellen and sister Suzanne, Allen Cook, Mike Myers, Sean's partner Bob, Ray Ray and Bobby, and countless other people who stopped by to help pin, iron and fold and give whatever time they could.

We tried to step up the features on this flag a notch or two to infuse it with even more pride than ever, but don't look for it to be perfect. There are flaws there as we all had our days when we weren't quite at a 100 percent. We figure they just add to the character of the whole thing and just another part of the (literally) blood, sweat and tears that went into its creation.

We hope that if you get a chance to touch or help carry the flag, you will feel some of that energy and love that went into it and maybe give it some of your own.

Exxon Refuses to Recognize Gay Employee Rights (Again)

Already under fire from Congress and consumers for record wind-fall profits while gasoline prices rise above an historic \$4 a gallon, the biggest domestic oil company has continued to take a corporate stance that many oppose both within and outside of the company.

The Rockefeller family, aided by some shareholders such as the New York City comptroller, who controls pension funds for city employees, has been trying to get ExxonMobil to add nondiscrimination against LGBT employees to its corporate governance.

The majority of shareholders, however, didn't agree; they voted down a proposal to add "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to Exxon's non-discrimination statement on Wed., May 28. Fox Business News reported that about 40 percent of outstanding shares voted in favor of the clause—not enough to send the issue to the oil company's board of directors.

The shareholder resolution has

come up for the past eight years. In 2000, the first year, it got only 8.2 percent. The percentage has grown every year since then. The Human Rights Campaign points to ExxonMobil as the only company they've had to use shareholder activism as a way to get the seemingly innocuous proposal before the company's attention.

"Our conversations with management never went anywhere," HRC spokesman Trevor Thomas told the business channel. That leaves ExxonMobil with what Fox calls "the dubious distinction of being one of the few major, and certainly the largest, corporation that does not provide protection to its LGBT employees."

QUEER NOTES

Queer News and Commentary

queernotes.blogspot.com

Architect of 'Don't Ask' Calls for Second Look

Former U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn, one of the primary lawmakers involved in the 1993 passage of "don't ask, don't tell," prohibiting gay men and lesbians from serving openly in the military, has called on the government to review the law.

"I think [when] 15 years go by on any personnel policy, it's appropriate to take another look at it — see how it's working, ask the hard questions, hear from the military. Start with a Pentagon study," Nunn said recently after an Atlanta seminar on national security, *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* reported.

Nunn, a Democrat from Georgia, would not state explicitly whether he supports ending the policy.

"I'm not advocating anything, except I'm saying the policy was the right policy for the right time, and times change. It's appropriate to take another look," Nunn said to reporters.

Though some LGBT activists and strategists see Nunn's statements as significant, many also say he did not go far enough.

"If you look at what he said, he didn't really say anything," said Aubrey Sarvis, executive director of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, which lobbies for

repeal of the "Don't Ask" policy. "He never called for congress to change the federal statute. He didn't say he favored repealing 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' Not many people have an opportunity to right a wrong 15 years later. I find it, all in all, to be very disappointing."

Sarvis told *The Advocate* that Nunn's move may be an indication that he's positioning himself for a high-level post in a Barack Obama administration.

"You can't avoid the speculation that it's an attempt to become now aligned with Sen. Obama's position on 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' If former Sen. Nunn has any ambition of entertaining the possibility being in an Obama administration, he knows he has to move away from his former position." Sen. Obama has clearly stated his support for repealing the policy.

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is widely seen by gays as infringing on their right to free expression.

As reported in the *Journal Con-*

stitution, Nunn added, "People don't understand that that was the beginning point. We basically made it possible for people to serve honorably in the military without lying on the application."



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Bobby Blake Pens Autobiography

My Life in Porn charts Blake's meteoric rise to fame and offers a fascinating, funny and sometimes disturbing insider's portrait of the adult entertainment industry. It is also a story of spiritual struggle, the quest for a meaningful life, for love and the need for community.

My Life in Porn explores questions such as, "How can a preacher become a porn-star?" and "How can a sex worker maintain a romantic relationship?" It looks into the self-destructive lifestyles of many porn-stars and is candid about exploitation and racism in the adult film business.

The book is also a revealing portrayal of the experience of growing up black and gay — or bisexual — in the Deep South in the 1980s, with a strong emphasis on the tension between the black church and sexual self-expression — and overturns some assumptions on the way.

50-year-old Blake maintains homes in Miami, Houston and Memphis. His philosophy about his success is simple: "I bring fantasies to life," he states plainly. "I live out what people want to see. And you know that's a powerful thing: watching your fantasies come alive."

Asked why he retired from the industry nearly seven years ago at his peak, Blake said, "I have always had the mentality that I would quit at the peak, and having made 60 films over three years, I felt I had taken the Bobby Blake persona as far as it could go. I had expressed what I needed to, and shown what I needed to show. So I wanted to

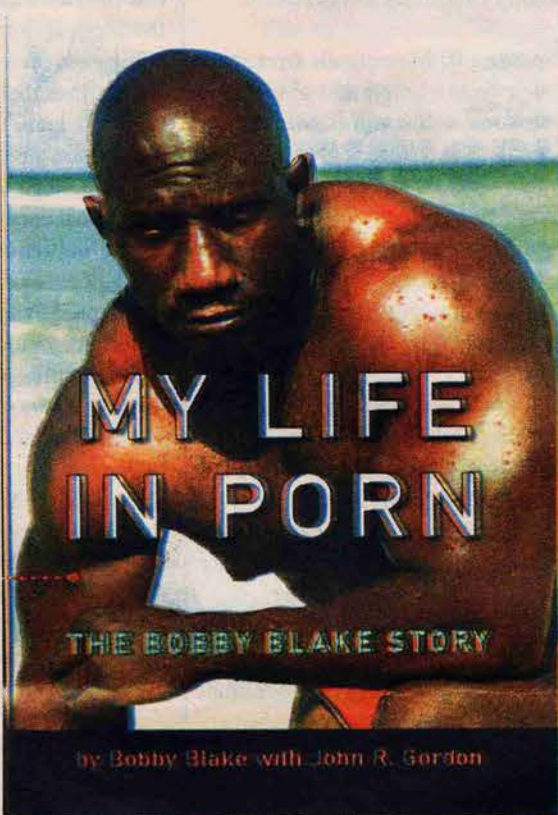
move on with my life and do other things."

Blake was a minister before he went into the porn industry. He has a degree in Business Administration and is pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice.

"I am now working on a master's degree in criminal justice. After I'm done with it...I will move on and work on a doctorate in criminal justice. There are a lot of people who are in the porn

business who have degrees... they have just chosen to take a different route. There is a lot of money in the porn business, you just have to know what you are doing and stand for something in doing what you do."

Blake says that when he's finished with school, "I want to teach on a college level in the field of



criminal justice. I am no different from anyone else; I can do what ever it takes to make my life a happy one."

My Life in Porn: The Bobby Blake Story is the only book about the sex industry to reveal a black, gay perspective, and as such is unique. It is a rough ride, but also unquestionably an exciting one.

Startling Masturbation Survey Results

To celebrate National Masturbation Month in May, Gay.com ran a series of truly unique and provocative surveys about solo sex.

They got real, asking how you do it, when you do it, where you do it. Naked or clothed? Lights on or off? Whom do you tell? Ever been caught?

Just to make it more interesting, they even asked readers to forward the surveys to their lesbian and straight friends, so they could answer, too.

Well, the results are in. 29,341 people took the surveys during the month of May, and the grand total of answers to the four surveys (with a total of 49 questions each for gay guys, straight guys, straight girls and lesbians) is a whopping 338,730.

The results were surprising, to say the least. Some of the more eye-opening stats:

- 41 percent of straight men have masturbated in a gym locker room — while only 34 percent of gay men have.
- 51 percent of gay men say they masturbate more when they are in a relationship.
- 53 percent of gay men say they masturbate once a day.
- More straight people (17 per-

cent of men and 15 percent of women) find masturbation more enjoyable than having sex. In contrast, 8 percent of gay men and 8 percent of lesbians prefer masturbation to having sex with a partner.

• Women moan: 33 percent of straight women and 34 percent of lesbians say they're moaners, opposed to 19 percent of straight men and 16 percent of gay men.

• Sixty-seven percent of straight men and 63 percent of gay men have masturbated at work. 52 percent of straight women have done the deed on the job — but only 39 percent of lesbians have.

"Mention a masturbation survey, and everyone giggles at first," says Gay.com's health and fitness editor. "But once people saw that tens of thousands of others were responding, it really took off."

"When gay men started forwarding these surveys to their straight and lesbian friends, we were amazed at the momentous response we got — and the answers were extremely unexpected!"

Justice League Getting Gays

Good news for all you comic loving queers.

DC Comics announced a new Justice League line-up May 26. While we're sure some will be thrilled to hear that Green Lantern's in the saddle as the team's leader, others will probably be more interested to hear that this eight-member super group will include two

—count 'em, two — homos: the lesbianic Batwoman and Mikael Thomas, also known as the blue alien Starman from the 1970s.

Meanwhile, take a look at Supergirl — more like Superslut in that mid-drift costume. Seriously, she fights crime in that?



Batwoman



Starman

Correction:

Last month in an article on the anniversary of Inz and Outz we incorrectly identified the previous owner of the shop. His name is Ray Casteel. We apologize for the error.

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Music of the Night is Theme for *Out Tonight 7*

In celebration of Gay Pride Month, Emerald Theatre Company is presenting its seventh installment of its annual cabaret show *Out Tonight*.

This year's theme is "Music of the Night" and will feature favorites from *Phantom of the Opera*, *Starlight Express*, *City of Angels*, *Dreamgirls*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and many more.

The cabaret is performed by professional and amateur singers from

throughout the Memphis theatre community.

The cabaret will be presented for three shows only on June 19, 20 and 21 at 8 p.m. at TheatreWorks, 2085 Monroe. For reservations, call ETC's new business phone at 272-0909.

Dining Out for Life Raises \$75K for Nashville CARES

A record \$75,000 was raised during the sixth annual Dining Out for Life benefit for Nashville CARES, with some 60 restaurants donating at least 30 percent of food sales on April 29. Last year's event raised \$70,000.

Red Restaurant, which gave 100 percent of food sales from two days (a Sunday brunch and a Tuesday night buffet), raised \$7,500, making it the top restaurant contributor.

David Taylor, co-owner of Red Restaurant, said hundreds of diners made the donation possible, and that the two days were two of the busiest days the restaurant had experienced.

Gay Couples As Committed As Straight Couples

Gay and lesbian couples are just as committed in their relationships as heterosexuals and the legal status of their union doesn't impact their happiness, according to new research.

In two new studies that compared same-sex and heterosexual couples using different factors and methods to assess their happiness, scientists found few differences. "Among the committed couples, there were very few differences that we were able to identify either in terms of how satisfied these couples were, how effectively they interacted with one another or how their bodies responded physiologically while they were interacting with one another," Glenn I. Roisman, of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, said in an interview.

He and his colleagues compared 30 gay male and 30 lesbian couples with 50 engaged heterosexual couples, 40 older, married heterosexual couples and dating heterosexual couples.

They found that regardless of sexual orientation, as the level of commitment increased, so did the ability to resolve conflict — debunking the myth that same-sex relationships are not built on the same level of commitment as heterosexual ones.

In the second study researchers, who focused on how legal status affected relationship quality, followed 65 male and 138 female

same-sex couples in civil unions, 23 male and 61 female same-sex couples not in civil unions and 55 heterosexual married couples over a three-year period.

The researchers from the University of Washington, San Diego State University and the University of Vermont found that same-sex couples, regardless of their legal status, were more satisfied with their relationships and reported more positive feelings toward their partners and less conflict than heterosexual married couples.

But gay and lesbian couples not in civil unions were more likely than same-sex couples in civil unions or heterosexuals who were married to end their relationships, according to the study.

Both studies were published in the journal *Developmental Psychology*.

"My personal view is that I think it's very hard to make the case as has been made that these same-sex relationships are fundamentally different from opposite-sex relationships in the presence of data like these and other data in the developmental literature," said Roisman.

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YouTube Rectum Surgery Scandal

Two doctors and a nurse at the government-run Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in Cebu have been placed under preventive suspension by the Department of Health in Central Visayas for filming and posting a video of a rowdy operation they were involved in on the Internet.

The nearly 3-minute video showed dozens of people inside an operating room laughing as the surgeons removed an object from a male patient's rectum on Jan 3.

According to a statement issued by Ang Ladlad, the national organization of LGBT Filipinos, the 39-year-old gay man said he was drunk while his partner inserted a perfume canister into him on New Year's Eve which necessi-

tated an operation.


In the video, a doctor is seen carefully pulling out a 6-inch-long spray canister from the patient as someone calls out, "Baby out!" amid loud cheers and giggles. The doctor then removes the canister cap and sprays the contents toward a crowd of nurses and doctors viewing the procedure.

According to the *Cebu Daily*


News, the trio of Dr Phillips Leo Arias, head surgeon of the operation; Dr Joseph Montecillo, assistant surgeon; and nurse Carminia Sapio are among 14 medical staff members who are facing investigation before the Office of the Ombudsman in the Visayas for violating Section 3(3) of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

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Federal Court Rules Against Military's 'Don't Ask Don't Tell'

The military cannot automatically discharge people because they're gay, a federal appeals court ruled May 21 in the case of a decorated flight nurse who sued the Air Force over her dismissal.

The three judges from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals did not strike down the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. But they reinstated Maj. Margaret Witt's lawsuit, saying the Air Force must prove that her dismissal furthered the military's goals of troop readiness and unit cohesion.

The "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue, don't harass" policy prohibits the military from asking about the sexual orientation of service members but requires discharge of those who acknowledge being gay or engaging in homosexual activity.

The ruling led opponents of the policy to declare its days numbered. It is also the first appeals court ruling in the country that evaluated the policy through the lens of a 2003 Supreme Court decision that struck down a Texas ban on sodomy as an unconstitutional intrusion on privacy.

When gay service members have sued over their dismissals, courts historically have accepted the military's argument that having gays in the service is generally bad for morale and can lead to sexual tension.

But the Supreme Court's opinion in the Texas case changed the legal landscape, the judges said, and requires more scrutiny over whether "don't ask, don't tell" is constitutional as applied in individual cases.

Under the ruling, military officials "need to prove that having this particular gay person in the unit really hurts morale, and the only way to improve morale is to discharge this person," said Aaron Caplan, a staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington state who worked on the case.

Witt, a flight nurse based at McChord Air Force Base near Tacoma, was suspended without pay in 2004 after the Air Force received a tip that she had been in a long-term relationship with a civilian woman. Witt was honorably discharged in October 2007 after having put in 18 years — two short of what she needed to receive retirement benefits.

She sued the Air Force in 2006, but U.S. District Judge Ronald B. Leighton dismissed her claims, saying the Supreme Court's ruling

in *Lawrence v. Texas* did not change the legality of "don't ask, don't tell."

The appeals court judges disagreed.

"When the government attempts to intrude upon the personal and private lives of homosexuals, the government must advance an important governmental interest ... and the intrusion must be necessary to further that interest," wrote Judge Ronald M. Gould.

One of the judges, William C. Canby Jr., issued a partial dissent, saying that the ruling didn't go far enough. He argued that the Air Force should have to show that the policy itself "is necessary to serve a compelling governmental interest and that it sweeps no more broadly than necessary."

Gay service members who are discharged can sue in federal court, and if the military doesn't prove it had a good reason for the dismissal, the cases will go forward, Caplan said.

Another attorney for Witt, James Lobsenz, hailed the ruling as the beginning of the end for "don't ask, don't tell."

"If the various branches of the

Armed Forces have to start proving each application of the policy makes sense, then it's not going to be only Maj. Witt who's going to win," Lobsenz said. "Eventually, they're going to say, 'This is dumb. ... It's time to scrap the policy.'"

An Air Force spokeswoman said she had no comment on the decision and directed inquiries to the Defense Department.

Lt. Col. Todd Vician, a Defense spokesman, said he did not know specifics of the case and could not comment beyond noting that "the DOD policy simply enacts the law as set forth by Congress."

Witt joined the Air Force in 1987 and switched from active duty to the reserves in 1995. She cared for injured patients on military flights and in operating rooms. She was promoted to major in 1999, and she deployed to Oman in 2003 in support of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan.

A citation from President Bush that year said, "Her airmanship and courage directly contributed to the successful accomplishment of important missions under extremely hazardous conditions."

Her suspension and discharge



Maj. Margaret Witt

came during a shortage of flight nurses and outraged many of her colleagues — one of whom, a sergeant, retired in protest.

"I am thrilled by the court's recognition that I can't be discharged without proving that I was harmful to morale," Witt said in a statement. "I am proud of my career and want to continue doing my job. Wounded people never asked me about my sexual orientation. They were just glad to see me there."



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Same-sex Weddings to Start at 5 p.m., June 16

Wedding bells will begin ringing for California's same-sex couples at 5 p.m. June 16, state officials said.

San Francisco city officials are planning to marry large numbers of couples, possibly up to 500 a day, late into the evening and for days on end.

The state Office of Vital Records notified county clerks across the state that they could begin issuing marriage licenses as soon as the Supreme Court's decision granting marriage rights to same-sex couples takes effect.

"Its decision on same-sex marriage will be final at 5 p.m. June 16, 2008, (and) the California Department of Public Health's Office of Vital Records directs county clerks to begin using the new state marriage license forms at that time," said Suanne Buggy, spokeswoman for the records office.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom said this week he wanted the city to begin issuing licenses "the minute" the Supreme Court decision takes effect. City officials are coordinating volunteers to help issue licenses and perform ceremonies, City Administrator Ed Lee said.

The city is planning to stay open for weddings until 8 p.m. June 16 and will extend hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day after that "as long as there is demand," said Giselle Barry, a Newsom spokeswoman.

Barry said city officials anticipate they will be able to issue 250 marriage licenses and perform 500 ceremonies each day, with help from volunteers and other city employees.

"We are eager to start officiating ceremonies and granting licenses as soon as we can," Barry said.

Forty-four same-sex couples

made reservations to marry on June 16, as they and some city officials had assumed that was the day the Supreme Court decision would take effect. But the state told county clerks they would have to wait until the close of business that day and could begin issuing licenses June 17.

That determination prompted city officials to ask earlier this week for permission to begin the weddings after the close of business on the 16th. It is not clear whether those 44 couples will be guaranteed a slot later in the day on the 16th.

The Office of the San Francisco County Clerk had no comment on the state's decision. So far, couples have been able to reserve time slots to obtain marriage licenses and to have a ceremony performed.

Barry said city officials anticipate that couples will be able to use the county clerk's online reservation system to make appointments during the extended hours. To expedite the process, she said, couples from outside San Francisco should get a license in their home counties and then make appointments to have their wedding ceremony at San Francisco City Hall.

Barry said city officials have visions of more marriages than happened in the 2004 Winter of Love, when more than 4,000 same-sex couples were married at City Hall after Newsom ordered the county clerk to issue licenses to the couples.

"We're definitely eager to surpass that 4,000 married-couple mark," Barry said.

Biography Looks at Raymond Burr's Struggle With Being Gay in Hollywood

Raymond Burr, who played Perry Mason in the wildly popular television show and later starred in *Ironside*, lived a secret gay life in Hollywood when such a revelation would destroy a career.

Burr invented a biography for himself that included a wife and son who'd died, and used his busy schedule as a way to explain why he wasn't married.

But Burr and his partner, Robert Benevides, had a relationship for 35 years that was secret to most of the world except for a handful of close friends.

Michael Starr, a writer for the *New York Post*, chronicles Burr's life in a new Burr biography, *Hiding in Plain Sight: The Secret Life of Raymond Burr*.

Raymond Burr (1917-1993) was an enigma. A film noir star regularly known for his villainous roles in movies like *Rear Window*, he delighted millions of viewers each week with the top-rated shows *Perry Mason* and *Ironside*, which ran virtually uninterrupted for 20 years.

But Burr was leading a secret gay life at a time in Hollywood when such a lifestyle was akin to career suicide.

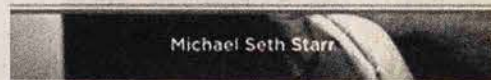
He invented a tragic biography for himself in which he was mythologized as a heart-broken husband and father.

There was even an invented affair with a teenage Natalie Wood, 21 years his junior. He fought for truth as Perry Mason and Robert T. Ironside, yet he couldn't admit his own deception.

Burr met his partner, struggling actor Robert Benevides, on the set of *Perry Mason*, and they remained together for over 35 years until Burr's death. Together, they built a business empire, traveled the world, and shared their passion for orchids and fine wine — keeping a secret from all but their closest friends — a secret revealed here for the first time in depth.



Hiding in Plain Sight THE SECRET LIFE OF Raymond Burr



Ex-PR Chief with AIDS Sues Kaiser

For a decade as public affairs director of Kaiser Permanente, Jeffery Sterman was the voice of the medical system, helping to craft policies and practices for patients with HIV.

Now the San Francisco man is suing the Oakland-based Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, charging that Kaiser discriminated against him as a gay man with AIDS.

Sterman's lawsuit was filed in San Francisco Superior Court last month and served on Kaiser in the first week of June. In the suit, Sterman alleges violations of state and federal laws.

Charging that Kaiser has a "toxic corporate culture," Sterman said

that when his doctors told him to scale back to a 40-hour week because of active HIV symptoms, Kaiser responded by adding to his workload.

"If you cannot work 60 to 70 hours a week, they don't want

you," he said in an interview.

Sterman, on leave since last year, is suing for — among other claims — harassment, retaliation, failure to accommodate a disability, breach of contract and wrongful demotion.

McCain on *Ellen*: Marriage Between Man, Woman

Presidential hopeful Sen. John McCain, long opposed to gay marriage and even civil unions, appeared on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, saying that he disagrees with the California decision, but wishes her all the best as she makes plans to walk down the aisle with girlfriend, actress Portia de Rossi.

DeGeneres tried to sway McCain's opinion by explaining to the senator that she views the issue in the same way as when blacks and women didn't have the right to vote.

"Women just got the right to vote in 1920, and blacks didn't have the right to vote until 1870," she noted, adding, "It just feels like there's this old way of thinking that we are not all the same. We are all the same. . . You're no different than I am."

"I've heard you articulate that position in a very eloquent fashion," McCain countered. "I just believe in the unique status of marriage between man and woman, and I know that we have a respectful disagreement on that issue; and I along with many, many others wish you every happiness."

At times looking uncomfortable, McCain acknowledged the necessity of partnerships for legal agreements: "I think people should be

able to enter into legal agreements. And I think that it is something we should encourage, particularly in the case of insurance and other areas where decisions have to be made."

"So, you'll walk me down the aisle?" DeGeneres said to laughter and applause from the audience. "Is that what you're saying?"

"Touche," was the senator's response to loud applause.

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Why the Calif. Supreme Court Decision on Marriage Can Withstand Legal Scrutiny

In May the California Supreme Court rolled in a 121-page blackboard and taught Americans a lesson in bread-and-butter constitutional principles. The court ruled that the state could not constitutionally maintain a legal distinction between gay and lesbian couples and their heterosexual counterparts.

Noting that marriage has long been considered a fundamental right, the court restated the bedrock constitutional principle that in order to deny access to a fundamental right, not only must the state have a compelling interest but the denial must be necessary to achieve that interest. The court also concluded that crafting separate but purportedly equal legal statuses for families headed by gay and straight couples violates the state's equal protection clause, in part because marriage alone gives the utmost dignity and respect to a family.

The state cannot deny a fundamental right absent a compelling interest. The state cannot create distinctions in legal status among classifications of people absent a compelling interest.

These same principles have laid the foundation for hundreds of state and federal cases in the past several decades. By the conclusion of Constitutional Law I, every law student is familiar with them.

Yet critics of the May 15 decision are saying that it is a radical departure from prior law. It is not. It is simply a departure from prior resistance to acknowledging that gay people are equal to everyone else.

If gay people — and the families that thousands in California have created, nurtured, and loved — were not equal to their heterosexual neighbors, then a constitutional mandate of equal protection and fundamental rights could be considered a departure from the settled principles the court claimed to espouse. But once you understand — as the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and every mainstream social welfare, mental health, and children's welfare group has done — that gay and lesbian couples love each other as much, live as well, parent as well, and support each other as responsibly as anyone else, In re: Marriage cases becomes the easiest Constitutional Law exam answer ever: Apply strict scrutiny, and place all citizens on equal footing with one another

In Judicial Hands

The critics of the California decision are therefore wrong when they argue that the court read a right to "gay marriage" into the state constitution or redefined what marriage is. The court did

not create a new right, but rather recognized that a previously excluded group of people possessed an already existing right. Coming to this conclusion simply required the justices to conclude that there is nothing about gay people that disqualifies them from the rights guaranteed to all citizens of California by the state constitution.

Critics have also accused the court of usurping the power of the legislature and the people to determine whether gay and lesbian couples should be considered equal under state marriage laws. This argument is both politically inaccurate and legally incorrect.

Before the court issued its decision, the California Legislature had twice passed a bill legalizing marriage for same-sex couples. Citing the previous ballot initiative and the pending court challenge to the initiative, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger twice refused to sign the bill, saying that either the voters or the courts would decide the issue. In other words, the legislative branch attempted to act, and the executive deferred instead to the judiciary.

The political argument isn't passing muster in Massachusetts either. After the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court declared that the state could not bar same-sex marriage in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* (2003), the state legislature failed to pass an amendment reversing the decision. In the next election cycle, the voters overwhelmingly re-elected legislators who voted against that amendment and replaced several anti-marriage-equality members with supporters of marriage equality. Following the will of the electorate, the state legislature has reinforced the court's ruling.

Yet some still find it convenient to assail judicial action in favor of same-sex marriage as somehow unauthorized, because that garners suspicion among laypeople.

The charge that the California court has usurped political power is also flawed as a matter of law. When the court acknowledges — as the facts demand — that gay and lesbian couples are equal to any others, it is both nonsensical and unconstitutional to demand that those couples pull together a political majority before they will actually be treated equally. No-

where in the California Constitution can you find a gay exception to fundamental rights. To write such an exception into the document is results-oriented and, to use the phrase favored by critics of the decision, "activist."

What is New

If In re: Marriage Cases represents an embrace of, rather than a departure from, well-settled constitutional principles, then why does it still feel so new? And why, after years of outright losses since *Goodridge* and halfway decisions in which courts fabricated gay exceptions to the nonmajoritarian principle of equal rights in order to "punt" to legislatures, did the California Supreme Court rule as it did?

No matter how pure and enduring the constitutional principles that direct its decisions, no court operates in a vacuum. As Justice Felix Frankfurter wrote, courts "should not be ignorant as judges of what we know as men." The justices in California know gay people and their families. And knowing them, the court could not possibly conclude that excluding them from equal treatment under law is necessary to further any state interest.

Four years after Massachusetts granted the first marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples in the United States, we know that doing so did not "rewrite" the marriage laws, change the character of marriage, or affect in any way the state's interest in promoting marriage as a stable institution for nurturing children and providing social and financial stability.

For opponents of gay and lesbian equality, it is uncomfortable — and strategically unwise — to concede that the case did not turn on a novel or inappropriate interpretation of the law, but rather a recognition of facts that conflict with their own views and values. These people believe that gay people must audition before the majority to secure their human rights because their actions or very nature render them unfit to claim these rights as people.

That is a political decision. Whether gay and lesbian families are guaranteed equal dignity under law is not.

This article by HRC Legal Director Lara Schwartz on the California Supreme Court marriage decision was originally published by Legal Times.

Gaze

Memphis GLBT Resources Directory

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

ADULT BOOKSTORES

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

BARS / RESTAURANTS

- 901 Complex*:** 136 Webster St., ☎ 522-8459
- Backstreet*:** 2018 Court Street, ☎ 276-5522.
- Buns on the Run*:** 2150 Elzey, ☎ 278-BUNS
- Crossroads*:** 1278 Jefferson, ☎ 272-8801.
- Lorenz/Aftershock*:** 1528 Madison, ☎ 274-8272
- Mary's*:** 405 N. Cleveland, ☎ 725-7334, www.mary'smemphis.com
- 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.
- 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):** BGALAc/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: gla@olemiss.edu, website: www.olemiss.edu/orgs/gla.
- WAC** (Woman's Action Coalition): PO Box 1203, 3566 Walker, Memphis 38111 ☎ 678-3339.

Queer Notes

Commentary by Jim Maynard

Happy Pride! Not only is this Gay Pride Month, but according to my "George W. Bush Out of Office Countdown Calendar," there are less than 225 days left of the Bush/Cheney nightmare! Unfortunately, the second Bush recession is well underway. The stock market is sinking, unemployment is rising, and a gallon of gas now costs as much as a jumbo margarita!

George Bush's job approval has fallen to 28 percent. Another former Bush administration official has written a book exposing more Bush lies and crimes. Former White House press secretary Scott McClellan spills the beans in a new book, confirming that Bush "misled" the public and congress about Iraq, and lied to cover up the outing of CIA agent Valerie Plame—both impeachable crimes.

The Senate finally released the long-awaited "Senate Intelligence Report" which discovered that Bush "misled" congress and "exaggerated" intelligence reports linking Iraq to 9/11 and Al Qaeda, and "ignored" evidence that contradicted it's claims.

You probably didn't know about this report, confirming that Bush lied and committed impeachable crimes, unless you watch the Comedy Channel!

John McCain is running for Bush's third term, promising more of the same—"100 years" in Iraq, to "bomb, bomb, bomb Iran," and more tax breaks for CEOs and the lobbyists running his campaign. McCain's campaign is based on his knowledge and "experience" on foreign affairs, but he doesn't even know the differences between the Shia and the Sunnis, and he thinks that Iran is supporting al Qaeda, its mortal enemy!

The Human Rights Campaign released a scathing report on John McCain's anti-gay record (*See page 3*). The report highlights McCain's opposition to LGBT equality on a number of issues. McCain opposed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, opposes including sexual orientation in hate crimes legislation, supports the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, supported anti-gay marriage amendments in Arizona and other states, and has promised the Religious Right that he would appoint

conservative anti-gay federal judges.

Despite McCain's anti-gay record and his support of the Republican Party's anti-gay platform, the Log Cabin Republicans are preparing to endorse him for president! The LCR website claims that McCain's record is misunderstood and that they will help "educate" the gay community on how John McCain will stand up to the religious right and support LGBT people.

Guess the Log Cabin Republicans missed McCain's visit to Tennessee where he promised his supporters that he supported "traditional marriage" (even though he dumped his crippled first wife to marry a rich bimbo 17 years younger) and opposed "civil unions" for gays and lesbians.

McCain did finally reject the endorsements, which he actively sought, of anti-gay pastors John Hagee and Rod Parsley. While Hagee and Parsley's anti-gay views and opposition to LGBT civil rights were well-known, McCain embraced them as his "spiritual advisors." McCain tried to distance himself from Hagee's attacks on Catholicism and Parsley's charge that the U.S. had a mission to destroy Islam, but never denounced their attacks on gays and lesbians. Only after a tape of Hagee claimed that Hitler was doing God's will, forcing Jews back to Israel, did McCain finally reject their endorsements.

Hillary Clinton finally conceded to Barack Obama, after trying to force the DNC to change the rules she agreed to and count the delegates she "won" in Florida and Michigan. The Clinton campaign actually claimed the Michigan primary should be counted even though Obama was not even on the ballot!

Even though Obama won more states and had more pledged delegates, and it was mathematically impossible for Hillary Clinton to win, Clinton supporters urged her to go all the way to the Democratic convention in August. It was looking like the Democrats would not have a nominee until August! Clinton finally gave in to the reality that it would be impossible to beat Obama and suspended her campaign.

Some Clinton supporters are so bitter they refuse to support Barack Obama and are threatening to support John McCain! I don't know which group is more pathetic, the Angry White Women who prefer the "pro-life" anti-feminist Republican John McCain, or the gay Republicans who support the anti-gay Republican candidate over the Democratic candidate who supports LGBT civil rights and won the endorsement of the Human Rights Campaign.

The California Supreme Court ruled last month that it is unconstitutional to deny same-sex couples the legal rights of civil marriage. The court refused to stay its decision. Meanwhile, anti-gay groups in California collected enough signatures to get a ballot initiative to overturn the court's decision. The good news is that recent polls show that over half (51 percent) of California voters now support the right of gays and lesbians to marry, and 54% oppose the ballot initiative, which has only 40% support.

Sulu is getting married! George Takei, who played "Sulu" on *Star Trek*, is going to marry his partner of 21 years in September. All the other *Star Trek* cast members were invited except "Capt. Kirk" (William Shatner). Evidently all was not well on the set of *Star Trek*. (I always wondered about Kirk and Spock.)

Cuba seems to be warming up to its gays. Last month gay activists held a government-supported conference on the International Day Against Homophobia, and is launching a campaign to fight homophobia in Cuba. Cuba's state television even showed *Brokeback Mountain*!

Raul Castro's daughter, Mariela Castro, has been leading efforts to support LGBT people in Cuba, and the Communist government now offers free sex change operations for transgender people in Cuba. (Ironic that Communist Cuba is becoming more supportive of gay people than the Republican Party in the United States!)

It's Gay Pride Month back here in the U.S.A. The Democratic National Committee and Barack Obama have issued their "Pride Proclamations" supporting LGBT equality (*See page 2*). The best way to celebrate Gay Pride would be to support political candidates and parties that support us. Let's have fun, party and celebrate, but get politically active and organized to turn our pride into power! "Yes We Can!"

(Visit queernotes.blogspot.com for more news and comments)

MGLCC Hires Batts as Executive Director

On June 1, the MGLCC board of directors appointed Will Batts, current treasurer and board member, to the post of executive director.

This paid position was made possible by the recent revision of the center's constitution and successful fundraising efforts and grant funding awards.

In his capacity of executive director, Batts will oversee the delivery and management of all MGLCC programs, according to Len Piechowski, president of MGLCC.

Batts has served for four years as a board member of the center, and as assistant commissioner of the Bluff City Sports Association. He has also been active in Tennessee politics by serving as an election official for his precinct in Cordova.

Batts currently is co-owner of a medical imaging equipment company and a medical consulting firm and has several years of professional experience with Columbia HCA as a purchasing manager for physicians. He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and over 65 graduate hours in a Ph.D. program in counseling psychology. Presently, he is pursuing



Will Batts

an MBA at Tennessee Tech.

He and his partner, Curtis, have been married for 10 years and have recently completed legal procedures and personal preparations to adopt an infant child. They expect to have that finalized within the next few months.

According to Piechowski, "Will plans to offer his resignation from the board of directors on June 30th in order to assume his new responsibilities on July 1. We hope that through your continued generosity and our continued fundraising we may one day soon be able to pay him what he truly deserves. In the meantime, he has agreed to accept a mere portion of what he is worth."

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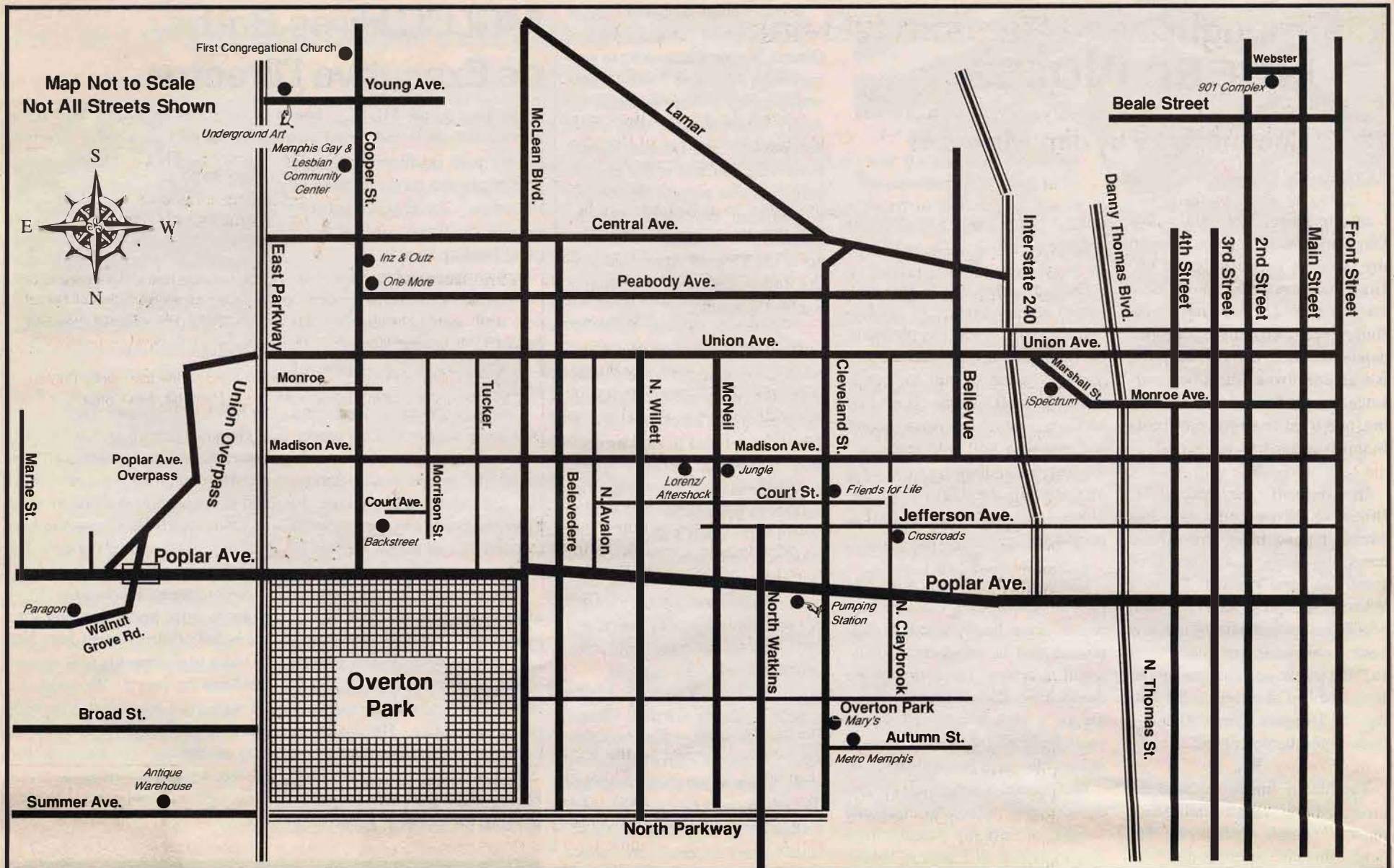
TENNESSEE

TEP

EQUALITY PROJECT

Shelby County Committee

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



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

June 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memphis Most Wanted Black Pride Celebration Pride in the Park, 9am-7pm, Overton Park 	June 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feast For Friends, 6:30pm, St. John's Methodist • Women's Rugby Practice, 6:30pm, Toby Park • Perpetual Transition, 7:30pm, MGLCC 	June 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Phoenix AA (Open Group), 8pm, Grace St. Luke's, 1790 Peabody 	June 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Womyn's Potluck, 6pm, MGLCC 	June 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton Pickin' Squares, 7pm, Holy Trinity UCC • Gayme Night, MGLCC 	June 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q-Cafe, 7pm, MGLCC 	June 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards Ceremony for 2008 Movers and Shakers, 7-11pm, Center for Southern Folklore, 119 S. Main St. • Mirror Image, 7pm, Holy Trinity
June 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stonewall Democrats, 2pm, MGLCC 	June 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Rugby Practice, 6:30pm, Toby Park • His Own Design, documentary, 9:30pm, WKNO 	June 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Phoenix AA (Open Group), 8pm, Grace St. Luke's, 1790 Peabody 	June 25		June 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gayme Night, 6:30 pm, MGLCC • Cotton Pickin' Squares, 7pm, Holy Trinity UCC • PFLAG, 7 pm, Central Library, 3030 Poplar 	June 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q-Cafe: 7pm, MGLCC • Andrew Prislovsky Art Opening, 7pm, MGLCC 	June 28	
June 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MGLCC Board Meeting, 1pm, MGLCC 	June 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Rugby Practice, 6:30pm, Toby Park 	July 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Phoenix AA (Open Group), 8pm, Grace St. Luke's, 1790 Peabody 	July 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men's Potluck, 6pm, MGLCC 	July 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton Pickin' Squares, 7pm, Holy Trinity UCC 	July 4	INDEPENDENCE DAY	July 5	
July 6		July 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feast For Friends, 6:30pm, St. John's Methodist • Women's Rugby Practice, 6:30pm, Toby Park • Perpetual Transition, 7:30pm, MGLCC 	July 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Phoenix AA (Open Group), 8pm, Grace St. Luke's, 1790 Peabody 	July 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennessee Equality Project monthly meeting, 6:30, Quetzal (668 Union) 	July 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton Pickin' Squares, 7pm, Holy Trinity UCC 	July 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q-Cafe, 7pm, MGLCC 	July 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaze Ad Reservation Deadline for Mid-July edition

Idle Thoughts and Random Musings

By Allen Cook

A romp through Gay Pride week is pretty trying for an old man like me.

I started by attending the Leslie Jordan performance of *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet*. I found Jordan very engaging and not unlike some people I know.

He's one of those guys who couldn't pass as straight if his life depended on it, but whose quick wit and ability to disarm his attackers with humor has left him in good stead. His quip at the Emmy Awards that *his* Emmy was the only woman he'd ever slept with is one of those lines that, Bruce Vilanch notwithstanding, couldn't have been written for him.

My next gay event was the MGLCC Cookout on June 7. Fortunately, only the cooking was out in the blistering heat. While there, I had the pleasure of meeting Russell Oliviera, head honcho of QBliss. Russell met the late Gary Wilkerson about a year before Gary's death and formed an immediate bond. "We were both on the same page, so I decided to help him with sponsorship and publicity," he said. Good for us, I say.

Did anyone catch the throw-away scene in A&E production of *The Andromeda Strain*?

As the only single member of the investigative team with the power to nuke the virus and save the world, Schroeder's character was asked by a female colleague why he was single. His reply was, "If you don't ask, I won't tell."

The female colleague says, "I always thought that was a stupid policy, anyway."

To which Schroeder goes on to

say, "It's ironic that the Army's extensive battery of psychological tests has conclusively determined that the person you are most afraid of is the best suited to make a decision in this sort of crisis."

A *USA Today*/Gallup poll says that 63 percent of adults say same-sex marriage is "strictly a private decision" between two people. What's even more interesting is that only 33 percent said that the government has the right "to prohibit or allow" such marriages and 4 percent had no opinion.

In my opinion all this proves is that gay marriage issue is a tempest in a teapot. The people that care about this issue (negatively) are outnumbered 2 to 1.

Not surprisingly, 56 percent of people in the South found the statement to be true, while the East led the pack with 73 percent.

Think that California are the most liberal folks in the nation? The West checked in with 64 percent and the Midwest slightly behind at 63 percent.

So if two-thirds of the American public says it should be up to the people involved, seems like it ought to be a done deal. Well, to see what the 33 percent are capable of, read on...

Chicago television station WTTW-Ch. 11 received a bomb threat June 3 in relation to its airing of the gay documentary *Out & Proud in Chicago*. The locally produced film documents the history of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in Chicago. "The threat shows that homophobia is still a dangerous reality," Chicago Commission on Human Rights Chairman Dana Starks in a statement.

When I first heard they were making a musical out of *Phantom of the Opera* (yes, I remember the Lon Chaney movie version), I thought: "That just ain't right." But this last week, I heard they are making an *opera* out of *Brokeback Mountain*.

The New York City Opera has commissioned Charles Wourinen to compose the opera based on a 1997 short story by Annie Proulx. It is expected to be ready to premiere in the spring of 2013.

Gives new meaning to the term "horse opera."

According to a *USA Today* "snapshot," the number three music download in the week ending June 1 (173,000) was "I Kissed a Girl" by Katy Perry. Now I haven't even got a clue as to exactly who Katy Perry is, but I will give her some props.

Some residents of Lesbos, a Greek island, are upset. They say the current gay use of the term "lesbian" offends them. Three of them are suing a gay Greek organization saying it, "causes confusion by using a geographic term in connection with (the group's) special character and social action," said Dimitris Papadelis, a lawyer representing the plaintiffs.

The defendants accuse those who brought the suit of homophobia.

Lesbos was the home of the ancient poet Sappho, who praised love among women. It is a major travel destination for gay women.

N.Y. Gov. Paterson Wades Into Gay Marriage debate

When asked what he thought about same-sex marriage, Gov. David Paterson of New York said, "I think it's beautiful. I think it's fine."

Paterson has directed that same-sex couples legally married elsewhere be treated the same by state agencies as their heterosexual counterparts.

That means, for example, that same-sex spouses of police officers or firefighters hurt on the job are entitled to full benefits, and the partner of a liquor-store owner who dies can keep the li-

quor license. And now gay spouses can submit proxy votes for their partners in elections, or collect workers' compensation benefits if a gay spouse died. They will be able to file joint state income-tax returns, taxes and have stronger rights in adoption and custody disputes. More than 1,000 state rules and regulations are affected.

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