

Triangle Journal News

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SEPTEMBER 2005

Let the Gaymes Begin

The Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center's Third Annual Gaymes is set for Oct. 2-9. Events will take place all over Memphis. As usual, competitive events are scheduled for people of all abilities.

Opening ceremonies will take place at the MGLCC, 892 S. Cooper, on Sun. Oct. 2, at 1 p.m.

The following are the events scheduled at press time:

Bowling — Sun., Oct. 2, Winchester Lanes, 3:30 p.m.

Laser Tag — Mon., Oct. 3, Putt-Putt on Summer Ave., 7 p.m.

Miniature Golf — Mon., Oct. 3, Putt-Putt on Summer Ave., 7 p.m.

Pool — Tues., Oct. 4, Location to be announced, 7 p.m.

Darts — Tues., Oct. 4, Location to be announced, 7 p.m.

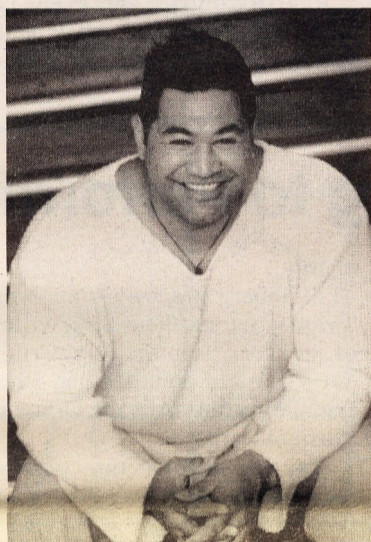
Board Games — Wed., Oct. 5, MGLCC, 7 p.m.

Volleyball — Thurs., Oct. 6, Walker YMCA (near U of M), 7 p.m.

Basketball — Thurs., Oct. 6, Walker YMCA (near U of M), 7 p.m.

Running — Sat., Oct. 8, East High School Track, 9 a.m.

Softball — Memphis Blues Bash Softball Tournament, Sat.

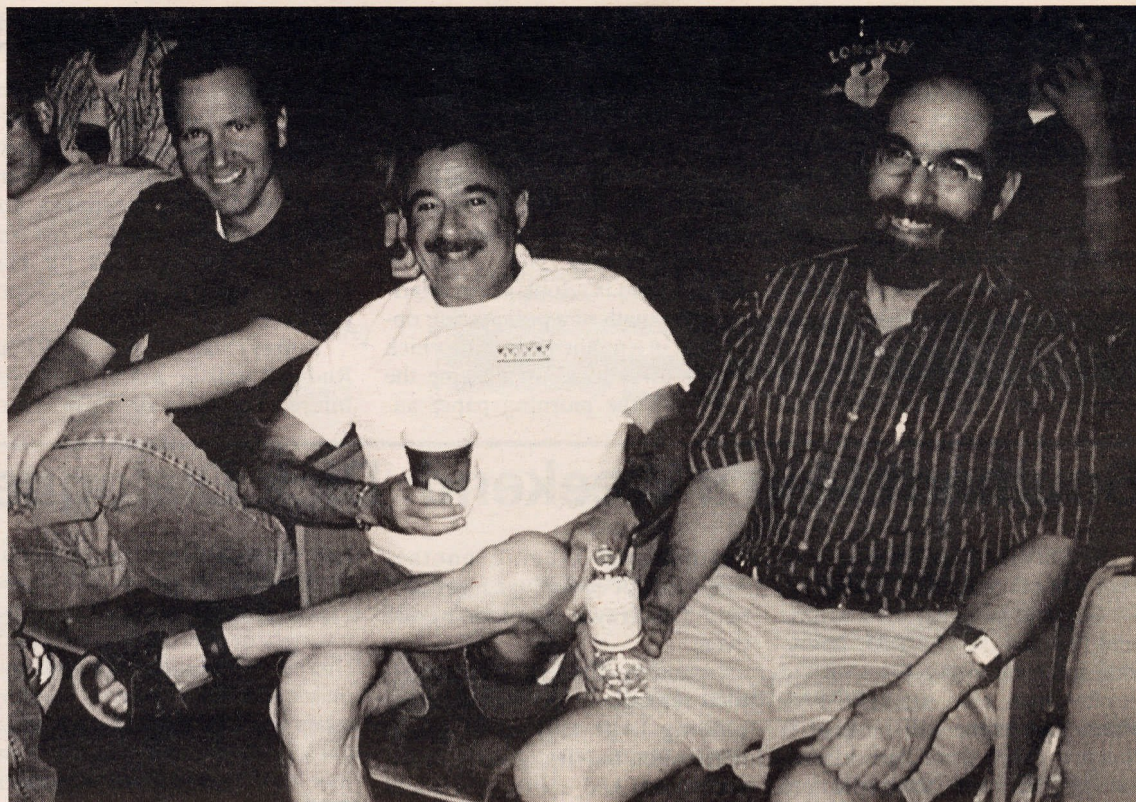


Esera Tuolo

and Sun., Oct. 8-9, Rodney Baber Fields, Times TBA.

The closing ceremonies will be held at the Nike Fitness Center at 3 p.m. on Sun., Oct. 9, and will feature former NFL player Esera Tuolo.

For more information on the Gaymes and for last minute schedule changes, contact Len Piechowski at (901) 857-8523 or e-mail him at mglcclen@midsouth.rr.com.



Realtors Glenn Moore, Steve Solomon and OutFlix Committee member Dr. Herb Zeman got front-row seats and were among the many who enjoyed the annual OutFlix Film Festival held Aug. 11-14 at the First Congregational Church's Media Co-op Theatre. The event was among the most successful ever drawing more than 200 people and raising \$1500 over four days. The festival featured 16 GLBT-themed films.

Gay Man Denied Custody of Quads

A messy custody battle has recently come to light as two gay fathers in Kentucky are fighting over joint care of their quadruplets, more than a year after they split up.

Thomas Dysarz and Michael Meehan had hoped to father one child each, but they made national headlines after their surrogate mother became pregnant with all four fertilized eggs implanted by doctors in 2001.

The quads are now three years old, and since then their surrogate mother has given birth to another child, this one fathered by Dysarz.

The men have been fighting over custody for just the quads, fathered by Meehan. Their custody fight became public as the battle ended.

Some of the records were made

public when the Kentucky Court of Appeals turned down Dysarz's case.

He had appealed a Fayette Circuit Court decision that ruled he did not qualify as a "person acting as a parent" of the quads under Kentucky law.

Fayette Family Court Judge Kim Bunnell ruled Dysarz stood "alongside the biological parent" and did not assume the role of a parent to the quads. Meehan, an attorney, had argued in his own case that this application of the law had nothing to do with the couple's sexuality.

He argued that he and Dysarz had split up two months before the babies were born in 2002, and had merely continued to share expenses for the children. They also shared a home and the business, Planet

Salon in Lexington.

Meehan said Dysarz fell in love with another man, whom he brought to live with Meehan and the quads in their shared home.

Dysarz denies Meehan's timeline and claims they were in a committed relationship for a longer period of time than Meehan admits. He argues he was the quads' parent.

Dysarz had asked the courts for joint custody of the kids and a time-sharing arrangement. But he gave up the custody fight when the appeals court turned down his case.

He told the *Lexington-Herald Leader* he was taking his case out of the courts and leaving it in "Jesus' hands."

Meehan currently lives with the quads in Atlanta. Dysarz stayed behind with his one child and runs Planet Salon in Lexington.

Two Arkansas Disc Jockeys Plead Guilty in Gay Porn Case

A pair of former Little Rock, Ark. radio station employees have been sentenced to community service and will have to pay \$250 in fines after pleading guilty to charges they distributed a gay-porn video to a minor during a gay-rights parade in Conway last year.

Phillip Beard and Christine Brown originally were charged with felony distribution of obscene film under Arkansas' obscenity statute. But after jurors were seated and the prosecution was a couple of hours into the case, the trial was interrupted. Both sides went into the judge's chambers, where the judge heard

the pleas.

Beard pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of distributing pornography to a minor; Brown pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor criminal attempt charge. Each was sentenced to 24 hours of community service and fined \$500 with \$250 suspended. Their court costs also were waived.

Beard said his intent was never malicious and the case was a misunderstanding. "I'm glad to get this past me. Now I can move on," he said. Brown characterized their behavior at the parade as "a joke" and said "there was never a case to begin with."

The two were accused of handing out obscene material during the June 2004 parade in Conway. A boy, then 16, said Beard gave him the video while dressed only in a skimpy black swimsuit. Jurors watched television news coverage of the parade, showing Beard waving a DVD and saying, "Gay porn. Gay porn."

Before testimony began, Prosecutor H.G. Foster said the case was important "as a societal statement. There are very few who would disagree that when it comes to distribution of explicit materials, generally as a society,

we think that's unacceptable."

Arkansas has a separate charge for distribution of explicit material to minors, but Foster said it was more appropriate to charge the pair under the state's general obscenity statute. Potential jurors had qualms about perhaps being asked to watch part of the tape, and the judge said he would help jurors decide what was obscene.

Jurors told lawyers and Circuit Judge Charles Clawson that they might have trouble setting aside their personal views of what is obscene. Clawson said he would instruct the panel on what constitutes obscenity.

Foster indicated that jurors might not have to watch the tape to ascertain what is on it, telling jurors he hoped they wouldn't be put in a position where they would have to watch the DVD. He said that, perhaps, the cover of the video would be enough to warrant a conviction. The prosecution testimony never got to the video before the trial was interrupted.

The radio station for which Beard and Brown worked said after the stunt that the pair no longer worked there. The parade also drew a protester who dumped cow manure along the route.

Emerald Theatre Company Announces Season

Three gay plays and its annual Pride week cabaret comprise the productions of Emerald Theatre Company for the 2005-2006 season.

All Dressed up And Nowhere To Go (Sept. 9-18) by Catherine Filloux is a quirky comedy about a group of Amish and a group of transvestites stranded together at a motel during a blizzard. Jacky, a stressed-out businessman who

cross-dresses on weekends, hopes to have a relaxing retreat with his friend Barbie — only to discover he's never been closer to home. *All Dressed Up* is being directed by Charlie Green

Texas Homos (Nov. 11-8) by Jan Buttram is a look at the hilarious aftermath of a police sting operation in a public restroom, which leaves three local men facing the music as the morning paper an-

nounces their arrests. A prominent doctor, a Methodist preacher and a young wannabe-superstar dispute the true details of their encounters as their lawyer prepares for Monday's arraignment. *Texas Homos* will be directed by Hal Harmon and will be a Mid-South premiere.

Jeffrey (Mar. 31-Apr. 6) by Paul Rudnick will be a Memphis premiere. Terrified of dying from

AIDS, but even more afraid of living with it, the title character of this romantic comedy makes the ultimate safe choice: to give up sex entirely. An audacious and moving romantic comedy with a difference — one in which the quest for love and really fabulous clothes meet, and where unflagging humor prevails even when tragedy might be just around the corner, *Jeffrey* will be directed by Hal Harmon.

Join ETC as it continues its annual celebration in honor of GLBT pride with the presentation of *Out Tonight 5: Harmony and Understanding* (June 8-10). The cabaret this year will have a slightly different twist, as the audience is taken on a musical journey to the '60s. All your favorite numbers from such hits as *Hair*, *Fiddler On The Roof*, *Mame*, *Oliver*, *Hello Dolly* and many more will be featured.

Southern Men's Weekend: Dick Dialogues for Gay and Bisexual Men

NASHVILLE—The Southern Men's Weekend: Dick Dialogues, for Gay and Bisexual Men will be held October 21-23, 2005. Registration is open to gay, bisexual and gay/bi- men who are age 18 or older. The event will be held at Natchez Trace State Park located halfway between Nashville and Memphis near Jackson, Tenn.

The fourth annual men's weekend will provide guys with a relaxed atmosphere for recreation and the opportunity to build friendships in an affirming environment. "I worked to create Dick Dialogues because I wanted a place for developing new friendships and discussion — without loud music, lots of

attitude, or it being another fundraiser or committee meeting," said Jim Hawk, founder of the event.

A variety of activities are scheduled throughout the weekend including large and small group discussion, movies, games, meditation, arts and crafts, sports and hiking.

Saturday night features a pajama party, costume contest and a "no talent" show.

Discussion topics range from body image and mental health to spiritual growth and gay wellness.

Dick Dialogues is open to men 18 and older regardless of race, religion, national origin, disability,

age, political leanings, economic condition, body size or HIV status.

The event is designed to attract a variety of participants to create a shared experience. "I think our major accomplishment is creating a safe space for ourselves where we explore who we are, who our communities are, and share our experi-

ences as gay men," said Mark Hubbard, member of the Dick Dialogues planning team.

Participants in past years have been from all parts of the Tennessee, the Southeast and even abroad.

Registration for the event is \$160, which includes meals and accommodations and all of the

weekend activities. Registrants who sign up by September 10 receive a \$30 discount.

For more information or to register, log on to www.dickdialogues.org or contact 615-361-8444 or via e-mail at <mailto:info@dickdialogues.org>.

Amy Steinberg to Perform at Café Q

With irreverent humor and crafty intelligence, Amy Steinberg uses her original music and poetry to promote tolerance, openness and diversity. Combining a sassy sensibility with a loquacious socio-political and spiritual awareness, she brings forth a fresh and solid

energy.

Steinberg has won numerous awards, among them Songwriter of the Year from the Songwriter Showcases of America and Best Solo Performer from the Orlando Music Awards.

Touring all over the country incessantly, Amy has played at

clubs, colleges, cafés, community centers and festivals. Notable shows include performances with Ani Difranco, Alix Olson, Lisa Loeb, Melissa Ferrick, Meredith Brooks, Vonda Shepard as well as many others.



Amy Steinberg

Currently she is working on her seventh independent release as well as preparing for the re-mounting of her International Fringe Festival original one-woman hit show, *Me Me Me Me* — an exploration of the human personality through caricature, song and monologue.

Classically trained on the piano since age 4, with a degree in theater (from studies at Boston Conservatory, American Musical and Dramatic Academy and Marymount Manhattan) and self-taught on the guitar, Amy's shows display wildly innovative musicality combined with extraordinary performance skills to create an arousing environment like none other. Themes of her music include woman power, faith, sexuality, acceptance and love.

Amy Steinberg will perform at the MGLCC, 892 S. Cooper, on Fri., Sept. 2, at 8 p.m. as part of the MGLCC Café Q series.

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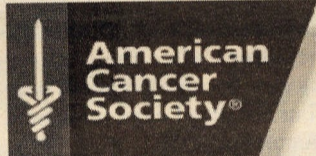


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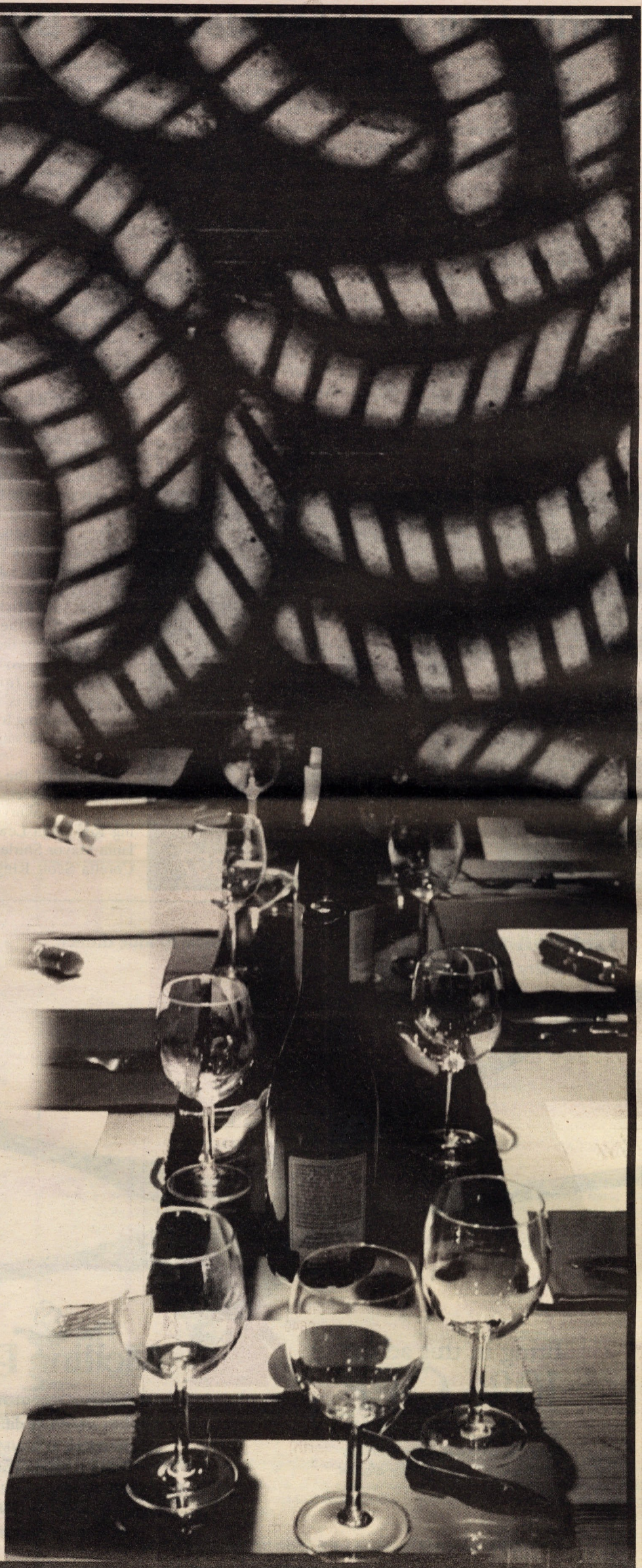
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Atlanta Has Become Mecca for Black Gays in the South

Erin Teixeira
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Once or twice a week, the women's drum circle gathers to practice. Drum Sistas' members pound and caress the skins, bonding through the rhythm in an atmosphere of like-minded women — activists and artists, all African-American, all lesbian.

It is no accident that they found one another in Atlanta. The city and its suburbs have, in recent years, become a mecca for black gays and lesbians.

The region now is home to the biggest concentration of black same-sex couples in the South, with nearly as many as the Chicago area, which has more than four times as many blacks. Many make

their homes in Atlanta for the same reasons that tens of thousands of other blacks have relocated to such states as Georgia, Florida and the Carolinas: a moderate cost of living and the familiar culture of the South, where most black Americans have family roots.

Though Atlanta's blacks generally reflect African-Americans nationwide — many are religious, socially conservative and critical of homosexuality — lesbians and gays in town are courted by elected officials and they have access to some of the nation's best HIV-fighting resources geared toward African-Americans.

Each year, the city hosts what organizers say is the biggest black gay festival in the world. "I had never seen that many black gay

folks in my life, and I was blown away," said Duncan Teague of his first visit, a two-week vacation from Kansas City in 1985.

"I was out of the closet, but not as out as I was down here. I could be whoever Duncan decided to be. And I was." He cashed in his return plane ticket, he said, and has lived there ever since.

"This is our home," said Mary Anne Adams, a social worker and chair of Zami, an advocacy group for black lesbians that organized the drum circle.

"This is the place that needs us the most and that we need the most."

Census data on same-sex couples show that the metro areas of New York, Washington-Baltimore and Chicago have more gays than Atlanta. But local residents and experts say the booming southern city is growing as a destination.

Two years ago, about 15,000 attended Atlanta's annual black gay festival over Labor Day weekend. A year later, that number had doubled, said Michael Slaughter, co-chair of In the Life Atlanta, which organizes the event.

"In Atlanta, you can stand out on Peachtree in front of a gay bar and very rarely is someone going to say something to you," he said. "It's just not the same" in other cities.

Several of the nation's most vocal black leaders supporting gay rights are based in Georgia, including Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin and Coretta Scott King. And though

advocates say more help is needed, a significant portion of the city's AIDS resources are focused on the black community.

For example, the Ponce Center serves 7,000, most uninsured and black, who are battling AIDS, the top killer of young black men.

David Malebranche, a physician who teaches at Emory University and works at the Ponce Center, said many black lesbians and gays settle in Atlanta because they "feel ostracized from the white gay community because of racism. People will migrate to a city where there is a lot of black people in general, and then within that you find your niche."

Indeed, many agree that Atlanta's gay community remains largely racially separated. "This is still the South. We have that kind of mindset," said LaMont "Montee" Evans, an advocate and health outreach worker.

"And then we have mega-churches and mega-preachers," he said, referring to tensions between black gays and some black churches.

In December, Bishop Eddie Long, whose New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta reports 25,000 members and counsels gays to become heterosexual, led thousands in a march against gay marriage.

Another local black minister last year called gay marriage "a threat to who we are and what we stand for." Bishop Wellington Boone of The Father's House church in Atlanta said in an e-mail interview that he does not hate homosexuals but feels morally bound to speak

"strongly against the lifestyle."

Of Atlanta's black gays and heterosexuals, he wrote: "Other than geographically, the two populations do not coexist. There is a gay lobby, a gay culture and gay clubs. Then there is the church."

Tensions have surfaced elsewhere, too. In 2002 at Atlanta's Morehouse College, the nation's only all-male black university, a student suffered a fractured skull after being beaten with a baseball bat by another student who suspected he was gay.

Such incidents help explain "why so many influential African-Americans (in Georgia) who are gays and lesbians have not come out," said Chuck Bowen, executive director of Georgia Equality, a statewide advocacy group that lobbied unsuccessfully against a new state law reserving marriage for heterosexuals.

Outside Atlanta, he said, Georgia's generally conservative politics make gay advocacy tough. But even so, two small Georgia cities — Macon and Albany — have some of the nation's largest proportions of black gay couples relative to all gay couples, according to a study by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Advocates say the community must now begin to flex its political muscle more effectively. "In Atlanta, we have a large gay population that votes," said Adams of Zami, which awards national scholarships for black gays and lesbians. "There are bread and butter issues that the black gay community cares about. We're doing better at leveraging that."

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Kanye West Calls for End to Gay Bashing

Kanye West says "gay" has become an antonym to hip-hop and that it needs to be stopped.

During an interview for an MTV special, the 27-year-old rapper launched into a discussion about hip-hop and homosexuality while talking about "Hey Mama," a song on his upcoming album, *Late Registration*.

West says that when he was

young, people would call him a "mama's boy." "And what happened was, it made me kind of homophobic, 'cause it's like I would go back and question myself," West said on the show, *All Eyes on Kanye West*, which aired Aug. 18.

West says he changed his ways, though, when he learned one of his cousins was gay.

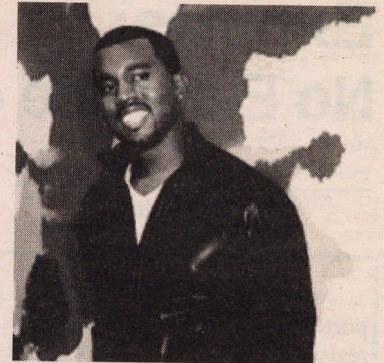
"It was kind of like a turning point when I was like, 'Yo, this is my cousin. I love him and I've been discriminating against gays.'"

West says hip-hop was always about "speaking your mind and about breaking down barriers, but everyone in hip-hop discriminates against gay people."

He adds that in slang, gay is

"the opposite, the exact opposite word of hip-hop." Kanye's message: "Not just hip-hop, but America just discriminates. And I wanna just, to come on TV and just tell my rappers, just tell my friends, 'Yo, stop it.'"

West, whose debut disc *The College Dropout* won a Grammy for best rap album, will see his second record in stores on Aug. 30.



Kanye West

Gay Ruse Helped Hendrix Avoid War

Rock star Jimi Hendrix pretended to be gay to get out of military service that would have likely sent him to Vietnam, according to a new biography about the '60s icon.

Hendrix had told reporters he was discharged from the Army after breaking his ankle on a parachute jump. But in *Room Full of Mirrors*, biographer Charles R. Cross writes that he did not discover that particular injury in Hendrix's medical records.

Instead the medical records detailed regular visits to the base psychiatrist at Fort Campbell, Ky., in the spring of 1962, while Hendrix was serving under the

101st Airborne. Hendrix told doctors he was in love with one of his squad mates and could not stop from masturbating.

According to Cross, Capt. John Halbert cited Hendrix's "homosexual tendencies" as the reason for discharging him.

Cross writes that Hendrix was too much of a womanizer to likely be gay. The biographer believes Hendrix wanted to escape the army to play music and had enlisted in the service to avoid jail time for stealing cars.

Steve Ralls, a spokesperson for Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), said Hendrix's story illustrates why

the ban on gay and lesbian soldiers should be dropped.

"Undoubtedly there have been other straight men and women who played gay to get out of the military," he said. "That's one of the stronger arguments about why the loophole shouldn't be there in the first place."

Room Full of Mirrors is being published to coincide with the 35th anniversary of Hendrix's Sept. 18, 1970, death from a sleeping-pill overdose.

Cross also did the biography of another musician who died at age 27: Nirvana's Kurt Cobain. The book, *Heavier than Heaven*, was published in 2001.

Spiritual Resources in the Memphis Area

Calvary Episcopal Church - 525-6602

First Congregational Church - 278-6786

First Presbyterian Church - 525-5619

First United Methodist Church - 527-8362

Holy Trinity Community Church - 320-9376

Idlewild Presbyterian Church - 726-4681

Living Word Christian Church - 452-6272

Neshoba Unitarian Universalist Church - 266-2626

St. John's United Methodist Church - 726-4104

St. Patrick Catholic Church - 527-2542

St. Therese Catholic Church - 276-1312

Unitarian Church of the River - 526-8631

Unity Church (Kirby Rd.) - 754-4241

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LET THE GAYMES BEGIN

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ESERA TUAOLO

{Former NFL Football Player}

Day Event Place Time

Sun	10.2	Opening Ceremonies	MGLCC	1pm
Sun	10.2	Bowling	Winchester Lanes	3:30pm
Mon	10.3	Laser Tag	Putt-Putt on Summer	7pm
Mon	10.3	Putt-Putt	Putt-Putt on Summer	7pm
Tues	10.4	Pool	TBA	7pm
Tues	10.4	Darts	TBA	7pm
Weds	10.5	Board Games	MGLCC	7pm
Thurs	10.6	Volleyball	YMCA at U of M	7pm
Thurs	10.6	Basketball	YMCA at U of M	7pm
Sat	10.8	Running	East High Track	9am
Sat & Sun	10.8 - 9	Memphis Blues Bash		
		Softball Tournament	Rodney Baber Fields	TBA
Sun	10.9	Closing Ceremonies	Nike Fitness Center	3pm



Contact **Len Piechowski** (mgiclen@midsouth.rr.com, 901 857-8523) for more information.

Experts: No Evidence of New HIV Superbug Seen in Rapid Progression Cases

Larry Buhl
PlanetOut Network

After three more men were reported to be infected with a drug-resistant strain of HIV, there is still no reason to conclude that a new, more treacherous strain of HIV exists, say AIDS activists and doctors.

A mini-panic began in February, when it was announced that a New York gay man who used crystal meth had developed full-blown AIDS in a matter of months.

The fact that his infection also proved resistant to three of the four most common antiviral drugs led New York health officials to sound the alarm of a new AIDS "superbug."

The issue resurfaced when a respected AIDS expert from Connecticut said that a new man, a 52-year-old patient of his identified as "ct101," infected his partner, the New York man and two others with the same strain.

Dr. Gary Blick, founder of the Connecticut HIV/AIDS Task Force, revealed his findings, which he confirmed through independent analysis, at the third AIDS Society conference on HIV pathogenesis and treatment.

But ct101 and the other two new men had not developed AIDS, one factor that lead the New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to squelch talk

of a newer and more treacherous HIV strain.

In a press release, DOHMH said the three new men, including the one described by Dr. Blick, had strains of HIV closely related to the strain announced in February. However, according to the release, "the source of infection for the patient announced in February cannot be determined with available information."

"Any of these patients, including the one described by Dr. Blick, or other patients who are as yet undiagnosed or unreported, could be the source," the release continued. Given the complexity of the investigation, we may never know.

Dr. Blick could not be reached for this story.

The assertions of Dr. Blick, as well as some mainstream news reports, have reignited panic among some gay men. But other health and HIV experts insist that much more research needs to be done.

"We're concerned about creating hysteria around this," said Noel Alicea, a spokesperson for Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC).

"What we continue to tell people is that there is potentially one case that's different from other things we've seen, and that we are waiting for more information to confirm that there's something unique. The New York Department of Health now says there was a confluence of factors, including resistance to medication and rapid

progression, in one man. In and of themselves, these factors are not new," Alicia told the PlanetOut Network.

Dr. Richard Jefferys, immunology project director for the New York-based Treatment Action Group, said the terms "superstrain" and "superbug" are "meaningless and nonsensical."

"The media are misinterpreting the New York Health Department press release," he said. "The release did not say that a similar virus caused rapid progression in anyone else."

"In the case of the New York man reported in February, it was likely an unfortunate combination of drug resistance and properties leading to rapid progression," Jefferys said. Rapid progression is

not fully understood, but it seems to relate to individual factors in a person's makeup, said Jefferys.

"In the absence of any other cases with the same features, it is possible these men were infected with more than one virus. And we have known that [multiple infections] can lead to rapid progression."

The link between crystal meth use and rapid progression is still unproven, Jefferys said.

"I'm disappointed by the overinterpretation of the facts in this case, because it puts more confusion and strain on already stigmatized groups," Julie Davids, executive director of Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP) said.

"We are at a time when we need

next-generation HIV prevention, such as microbicides or something like the 'morning after' pill, and we've been fighting for that. But what we are getting is scare tactics and news stories of 'deadly new strains' of HIV."

In the event that these infections turn out to be a worst-case scenario, there is little chance that the "superstrain" would render safer-sex practices ineffective, experts say.

"What we do know about transmission in all of these cases is that it can be prevented," Alicia said.

"Everything we've told people for years about sex precautions is still true. Even if investigations do turn up a new strain, there is no reason not to practice safer sex."

Diversity Committee in Trouble Over Anti-gay Remarks by Members

A Florida school board plans to suspend its Diversity Committee over alleged anti-gay remarks by members in connection to a controversial "tolerance" video featuring popular children's characters such as SpongeBob and Barney.

The Broward County School Board said it was approached by members of the homosexual community with demands to disband its 19-member watchdog group, the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* reported.

The Diversity Committee was the target of criticism this summer over its treatment of the Anti-Defamation League's *We Are Family* video, which was distributed to thousands of schools nationwide.

A pro-family activist group, the American Family Association, charged that the video was

part of an education package designed to surreptitiously promote the homosexual lifestyle to young children.

In a discussion about the video, Broward Diversity Committee member and radio host Steve Kane echoed that concern, evoking a strong reaction from homosexual activists. Kane resigned, much to the delight of Katy Peterson, a minister at the mostly homosexual Metropolitan Community Church in Palm Beach Gardens.

Peterson said there are others on the board like Kane who also should resign, because they "take the school board's thoughtfully crafted and progressive diversity policy and use it for toilet paper."

Board Chairwoman Stephanie Kraft said a special meeting will be held to decide the Diversity Committee's fate. But school

board lawyers warned that the Diversity Committee might be protected, because it was created as part of a settlement of a discrimination lawsuit.

Suspending the committee also would be a practical mistake, said the panel's chairman, Bill Rettinger, who pointed out the members are in the middle of an upcoming report on whether the district provides equal facilities to minority and non-minority children. Removing members could force the committee to start over again.

In January, the American Family Association's Stephen Bennett contended the mainstream media twisted the truth about the *We Are Family* video. He argued that the content itself — tolerance and diversity — and whether or not SpongeBob is "gay" were not the issues.

Bennett said that while the video, based on the 1979 hit song, does not promote homosexuality, it "will open the door to a secondary discussion of accepting homosexuality as natural and normal."

The AFA called the video a "gateway" to promote the homosexual lifestyle through an accompanying teacher's guide and the producer's Web site, which had a "tolerance pledge" for children to sign and print out that included "sexual identity."

Bennett, who says he formerly was homosexual, claimed an entire list of downloadable teacher's guides disappeared from the *We Are Family* Foundation website in January, after he appeared in an interview on the Fox News Channel.

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Lambda Legal Files Lawsuit on Behalf of Kansan Fired from Coldwell Banker Americana Because He's a Gay Man

WICHITA — At a press conference Aug. 17, Lambda Legal announced a lawsuit against Coldwell Banker Americana and one of its female employees arising from the termination of Tim Watchous who was fired from the company for being a gay man.

"Imagine being fired for something that has nothing to do with the value of your work," said Ken Upton, senior staff Attorney in Lambda Legal's South Central Regional Office in Dallas.

"While Kansas unfortunately doesn't have a law expressly prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the workplace, the company has its own rules about fairness in the workplace. They were ignored here."

In papers filed by Lambda Legal in Kansas District Court in Hutchinson, Watchous is suing the company on the grounds of breach of contract and Laurie Scofield for improper interference with the contract. The lawsuit states that in handling the harassment the way it did

and in firing Watchous, Coldwell Banker Americana violated its own anti-discrimination and harassment policies. Lambda Legal represents Tim Watchous, who worked for Coldwell Banker Americana (a franchise of the global real estate brokerage, Coldwell Banker) for three years. As marketing director, Watchous worked with the Hutchinson, Kan. real estate brokerage's franchise owner Shirley Brooks; Watchous' harasser, Laurie Scofield, the office manager; an office assistant; and more than 25 real estate agents.

The lawsuit alleges that although Scofield knew that Watchous is gay, she developed romantic feelings for him and started making unwanted advances toward him. Scofield told Watchous several times that she could change his sexual orientation if she could be with him physically just one night. Scofield's ongoing harassment of Watchous included writing and giving him a "poem" that read, "Twist the lock, get ready to rock, I want to go for a ride on

your cock."

Watchous complained to Brooks, about the harassment. Rather than addressing the harassment, Coldwell Banker Americana fired him. In an e-mail to Watchous the company admitted that he was fired because of a "bump in the road" with Scofield and because of "some of the concerns other agents had with your lifestyle."

The e-mail also expressed appreciation to Watchous for "everything you did while you were with Coldwell Banker."

"Coldwell Banker Americana made a promise to its employees to provide a harassment-free workplace," said Greg Nevins, senior staff attorney based in Lambda Legal's Southern Regional Office in Atlanta.

"Employees should be judged on the quality of their work — period. It is wrong that in situations like Tim's, the victim is often the person who is punished rather than the offender."

As a franchisee of Coldwell Banker Real Estate Corporation,

itself a subsidiary of the Fortune 500 company Cendant Corporation, Coldwell Banker Americana is bound by Cendant's corporate code of conduct that expressly forbids employment discrimination based on sex or sexual orientation. The policy states, "We are an equal opportunity employer and do not discriminate either directly or indirectly against employees or potential employees on the basis of... sex, sexual preference/orientation..."

In addition, Coldwell Banker Americana's own sexual harassment policy states that "Sexual harassment interferes with work performance; creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment... It will not be tolerated."

"My former employer knows the benefit of a harassment-free workplace — it's written down in their policies," said Watchous. "I chose to come forward because I wasn't being treated fairly and no one should have to endure the same thing I did."

Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.

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Billboard Company Rejects Pro-gay Advertisements

Ann Rostow
PlanetOut Network

Billboard company Lamar Advertising has rejected a series of ads from Georgia Equality, an LGBT rights group, that were scheduled to appear this fall in rural parts of the state.

The campaign, called "We Are Your Neighbors," features gay men and lesbians in various professions. A gay firefighter, for example, is captioned "I protect you, and I am gay. We are your neighbors." A lesbian doctor is similarly titled "I care for you, and I am a lesbian."

The first phase of the campaign has been running in the Atlanta area on billboards owned by Clear Channel. But the second phase, anticipated to begin in September or October, is planned for 38 rural counties.

Lamar Advertising is by far the largest billboard operator in these areas, although Georgia Equality is trying to find alternatives.

Based in New Orleans, Lamar Advertising owns 149,000 billboards, and is the national leader in logo signs — the signs on highway exits that indicate which fast food restaurants and gas stations await travelers.

The company's president, Kevin Reilly Jr., sent an e-mail to Georgia Equality on Aug. 1, explaining that although he himself might disagree with the decision not to accept the gay business, the choice is up to the local managers.

"Right or wrong," he wrote, "we give our local management the re-

sponsibility and authority to accept or reject ad copy."

Georgia Equality Executive Director Chuck Bowen said Reilly was "talking out of both sides of his mouth by embracing diversity and then turning right around and sanctioning the actions of a subordinate that opposes diversity based on a self-determined definition of community standards."

The subordinate in charge of the region is James Locke, general manager for South Georgia, who gave no reason for rejecting the ads.

However, Georgia Equality reports, Locke told a reporter that the problem lay in the language of the billboards. Given the simple text of the campaign, it appears that the words "gay" and "lesbian" are the offending elements.

"If Mr. Locke believes that having the word 'gay' or 'lesbian' on a billboard in South Georgia violates community standards," said Bowen, "then maybe those standards need to be changed to embrace diversity, understanding and humanity — not shun them."

The situation in Georgia comes on the heels of an outcry in Boston over a Gay.com advertisement, featuring two men wrapped in an American flag, on a Clear Channel billboard.

Anti-gay activist Brian Camenker led a charge against what he called "the most disgusting thing you'd ever want to see on the side of a street."

Although Clear Channel removed the ad, they did so one day

before the contract expiration, after the ad had been on display since

March.

Gay.com spokesman Spencer

Moore downplayed the incident, calling it "a non-story."

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Former Leader Condemns 'Ex-gay' Work

Larry Buhl
PlanetOut Network

Love in Action (LIA) co-founder John Evans wrote a letter to LIA's current director, John Smid, saying the movement leads to "shattered lives."

LIA made headlines and incited protests recently after the Web log of a 16-year-old youth named Zach Stark publicized his fears about

being taken to LIA's "Refuge" gay conversion camp against his will by his fundamentalist parents.

Evans' letter is likely to further turn up the heat on LIA and the "ex-gay" movement.

In 1973, Evans, a gay man, along with heterosexual preacher Kent Philpott, founded Love in Action, one of the first modern gay conversion groups, in San Rafael, Calif. Evans later dropped out after his best friend committed suicide after his gay "conversion" failed.

"In the past 30 years since leaving the 'ex-gay' ministry I have seen nothing but shattered lives, depression and even suicide among those connected with the 'ex-gay' movement," he told Smid. Saying he understands now that one can be gay and Christian, Evans encouraged Christians to "investigate all sides of the issue of being gay and Christian."

"The church has been wrong in the past regarding moral issues, and I'm sure there will be more before Christ returns."

The letter was posted at waynebesen.com, a blog published by Wayne Besen, an author and activist who wrote, *Anything But Straight: Unmasking Scandals and*

Lies Behind the Ex-gay Myth, which featured a chapter on Evans.

Although Evans came out publicly years ago, the letter marks the first condemnation of the movement to a larger audience. "Having the founder of a movement he created say it doesn't work and is even harmful should send shockwaves through the 'ex-gay' ministry," Besen told the PlanetOut Network.

"This is like Randall Terry saying Operation Rescue is bunk, or James Dobson repudiating Focus on the Family."

"Evans' letter helps pull the rug out from under the reparative therapy argument and further undermines the argument of choice that the right wing has been making for political gain," said Ron Schlittler, deputy executive director of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG).

The "reparative therapy" industry has come under increased scrutiny for using disproved medical theories to "cure" LGBT adults and youth. LIA in particular has been the target of investigations by the Tennessee Department of Health and has expunged the word "therapy" from its Web site, since it doesn't have a state license to practice psychological counseling.

The increased public attention on LIA and other groups is a hopeful sign, Besen said, because the ministries' claims of conversion never hold up under scrutiny.

"They say they have changed hundreds of thousands of gays, but where are they?" he asked. "You can't find one person who is not on the payroll of an 'ex-gay' ministry who will go on the record to say they've been changed permanently. It's time for them to put up or shut up."

"These ministries have merged pseudo-science with religious beliefs to create, in effect, a new religion," Besen continued.

"Eventually they will collapse under the weight of their deceit. But as long as they survive we will have trouble winning any political battles."

Roberts Aided Gays in Historic Colorado Case

Supreme Court nominee Judge John Roberts offered his pro bono services to the gay-rights advocates fighting Colorado's Amendment 2 nearly 10 years ago, the *Los Angeles Times* reports.

According to the *Times*, the team of lawyers preparing to argue *Romer v. Evans* before the U.S. Supreme Court in October of 1995 turned for help to the Washington law firm of Hogan & Hartson.

Lead counsel Jean Dubofsky recalled Roberts as one of several attorneys at the firm who prepped her on her Supreme Court appearance. Roberts urged her to review the lower court record, and played the role of a Scalia-like justice during a practice session.

"John Roberts ... was just terrifically helpful in meeting with me and spending some time on the issue," Dubofsky told the *Times*. "He seemed to be very fair-minded and very astute."

Accepting a pro bono assignment is generally up to an individual lawyer.

Walter A. Smith Jr., head of Hogan & Hartson's pro bono division at the time, recalled that Roberts seemed happy to take on the gay-rights case.

"He said 'Let's do it,'" Smith told the *Times*. "And it's illustrative of his open-mindedness, his fair-mindedness. He did a brilliant job."

In *Romer v. Evans*, the high court reviewed a ruling from the Colorado Supreme Court that struck down an amendment outlawing gay rights measures throughout the state. Gay-rights activists were concerned when the court accepted the case, given the

possibility that the justices might reverse the decision from the Colorado court and create a new anti-gay precedent.

Instead, in an opinion written by Justice Anthony Kennedy, the 6-3 court handed down what was then the most powerful gay-rights decision in the court's history.

The issue in *Romer* was more than a matter of equal protection for gay men and women. The Colorado amendment had singled out a group of people for no apparent reason, and then deprived them in advance of access to much of the political process.

According to the legal history *Courting Justice*, by Deb Price and Joyce Murdoch, Kennedy and the four liberal justices seemed appalled by the unprecedented scope of the amendment during oral arguments. Even Justice O'Connor found a clear legal path to cast the sixth vote.

Seen in this context, Roberts' guidance does not translate directly to a leaning in favor of gay rights in other contexts. But it does suggest, first, that he is not a knee-jerk homophobe, and, second, that he would apply constitutional principles in gay cases without being distracted by the issue of gayness itself.

Reacting cautiously to the *Times* article, Lambda Legal called the news "one more piece that will be added to the puzzle of vetting John Roberts."

The Human Rights Campaign, in turn, said Roberts' role in *Romer* was "noteworthy," but "adds little to our understanding of how he would vote on the court."

Support Grows for Gay Marriage in United States

The marriage equality movement may be gaining momentum in the United States as new poll results show an increasing number of Americans support marriage rights for gay couples.

According to the new Pew Research Center for People & the Press/Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life poll, 35 percent of Americans polled were in favor of allowing gay couples to get legally married. Fifty-three percent still opposed marriage for gay couples, but that same number of people polled, 53 percent, said they wanted gay couples to have some kind of legal arrangement, such as civil unions.

"This is exactly what the right wing is afraid of," Evan Wolfson, executive director of Freedom to Marry, said. "People have had a year of legal marriage in Massachusetts to see how ending marriage discrimination helps gay and

lesbian families and hurts no one."

Following the 2003 Massachusetts decision that gay couples could get married, 11 states passed anti-gay marriage amendments, and poll data showed a slip in support for marriage rights. The poll also showed a slight increase in religious groups' support for marriage rights.

Gay rights advocates such as Wolfson suggest these latest poll results on the marriage issue show the effectiveness of gay activism and the impact of equal marriage rights in Massachusetts.

"The long-term trend in America's civil rights discussion, including this recent rebound of public support for marriage equality, which follows the ferment and barrage of the past several months, demonstrates the power of engaging the public and showing them the reality of marriage equality, rather than right-wing rhetoric and scare tactics."

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McGreevey's Impact on Gay America Debated

Geoff Mulvihill
Associated Press Writer

In the year since New Jersey Gov. James E. McGreevey told the world, "I am a gay American," his words have appeared on bumper stickers and his likeness on an action figure. But a year after McGreevey became the nation's highest-ranking, openly gay elected official, it does not appear he had much of a long-lasting effect on gay America.

McGreevey's soul-baring speech drew national attention Aug. 12, 2004 as he declared his sexuality in one breath and announced his resignation with the next.

For some gay Americans, the governor closing the door on his political career still overshadows his coming out of the closet. "I had mixed feelings about the way McGreevey did it," said Allan H. Spear, a former state senator in

Minnesota who in 1974 became one of the nation's first state lawmakers to acknowledge publicly that he was gay.

"It made it sound as though this was some sort of a fatal flaw. The fact that the coming out was accompanied by the statement that, 'I'm going to resign,' took away some of the positive impact it may have had."

McGreevey's speech was carried live on national television and stories about it were in newspapers around the world the next day. Coverage of the story earned *The Star-Ledger* of Newark a Pulitzer Prize.

McGreevey made immediate — but short-lived — ripples in pop culture, starting with jokes from the likes of David Letterman and Jon Stewart.

Within a week, the Connecticut toymaker Herobuilders.com was selling McGreevey action figures. Company owner Emil Vicale said

that among the Herobuilder action figures of 10 or so politicians — a lineup that includes Hillary Clinton, President Bush and Arnold Schwarzenegger — McGreevey's is by far the slowest selling.

Northampton's Pride and Joy, a gay book and gift shop in Northampton, Mass., has been selling bumper stickers that say "I am a gay American."

Similar stickers and T-shirts with the slogan are also available on several Web sites. At Rainbow Road, a gay-themed gift shop in Minneapolis, the McGreevey-inspired trinkets have not made an appearance. In fact, when asked about McGreevey's impact, shop owner Jim Connelly responded: "Who is he?"

While the fact that he was gay got the most attention, McGreevey had been having a tough few months.

Two major fundraisers had been indicted. It also was later revealed

that the former aide, identified by McGreevey confidantes as the governor's lover, was threatening to file a sexual harassment lawsuit that never came about.

The man, Golan Cipel, denied having an affair with McGreevey and denied being gay.

Jeff Jones, a former co-chairman of the Fairness Alliance, a gay rights group based in Louisville, Ky., said that for a few days last August, McGreevey was a hot topic on gay-oriented online message boards in Kentucky.

"The way I felt and maybe what the consensus was, the issue was not that he was gay but that A) he was cheating on his wife and that B) he was using his political power to get his boyfriend a job," said Jones, a professor at the College of Public Health at the University of Kentucky.

But to Scott Schmidt, a West Hollywood, Calif., blogger who describes himself as a gay Repub-

lican, it was an odd but promising sign for America's acceptance of gays that McGreevey seemed to use his being gay as "a cover-up for the corruption."

"Ten years ago, 20 years ago, the corruption would have been better than being gay," said Schmidt. McGreevey has tried to live out of the public eye since he left office in November. He worked for a time for a law firm, has traveled to West Virginia to research poverty and is working on a book. But he has not yet submitted to media interviews.

Steven Goldstein, chairman of Garden State Equality and perhaps New Jersey's most visible gay activist, said McGreevey's words might be better remembered than the man himself. "It really qualifies as a *Jeopardy* \$100 question," Goldstein said. "Who said: 'I'm a gay American'?"

Social Security Privatization Will Disproportionately Harm LGBT Americans

WASHINGTON — The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force released a report Aug. 9 that finds that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans will be disproportionately harmed by President Bush's plan to privatize Social Security.

According to *Selling Us Short: How Social Security Privatization Will Affect Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Americans*, LGBT Americans, on average, have lower incomes than their heterosexual counterparts, which translates into lower Social Security benefits when they retire.

In addition, same-sex couples are not eligible for Social Security's spousal and survivor benefits provisions, making the LGBT community disproportionately vulnerable to the benefit cuts and risks inherent to the president's plan.

"There is a widespread myth that gay people are economically advantaged compared to heterosexuals. U.S. Census data and other national surveys indicate the opposite. In fact, gay and bisexual men earn anywhere from 13 to 32 percent less than heterosexual men," said Sean Cahill, director of the Task Force's Policy Institute, which published the study.

"If we earn less, we receive a lower Social Security payment in retirement. Any proposals that cut retirement benefits will disproportionately hurt gay people."

Selling Us Short finds that LGBT people of color, in particular, face an income disadvantage that leads to lower Social Security benefits.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, black same-sex couples earn roughly \$2-\$9,000 less in median annual household income than black married opposite-sex couples, and Hispanic same-sex couples earn roughly \$1-\$4,000 less in median annual household income than Hispanic married opposite-sex couples. Discriminatory government policies, meanwhile, place gay people in an even more economically disadvantaged position, increasing the critical need to maintain the economic safety net Social Security is intended to provide.

"Gay people have to report domestic partner health insurance as income to the IRS, but married spouses don't have to report their health coverage as income," explained Cahill.

"Gay people can't inherit their partner's pension plan, while a heterosexual widow or widower can be a beneficiary. Not only do we earn less, we are less able to keep what we earn. These are among the many inequities that make same-sex couples particularly vulnerable to cutbacks in Social Security benefits," Cahill said.

Added Many Hu, author of the report: "The federal Defense of Marriage Act continues to deny same-sex couples access to more than 1,000 federal benefits and protections of marriage that opposite-sex married couples currently receive, including Social Security spousal and survivor benefits. Even though LGBT Americans pay into the Social Security system at the same rate as everyone else, our families and children receive fewer

benefits, often in times of crisis. If Social Security is to be changed, it should be changed so that all families are treated fairly."

"Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are more likely to age alone and less likely to have children than their heterosexual counterparts," said Amber Hollibaugh, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's senior strategist and specialist on LGBT elders.

"This, coupled with a lower rate of earning makes them particularly reliant on Social Security." *Selling Us Short* finds that LGBT elders could be negatively affected by privatization. By 2030, the estimated population of LGBT seniors will range from two to eight million.

"It is would be wrong to support privatization in exchange for opening a portion of Social Security to same-sex couples while overlooking the fact that marriage equality — which the Bush administration vehemently opposes — would guarantee all Social Security benefits to all same-sex couples. We are unwilling to trade illusory benefits against the benefits and rights of other Americans," said National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Executive Director Matt Foreman.

Selling Us Short: How Social Security Privatization Will Affect Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Americans is available at <http://www.thetaskforce.org/library>. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute is the gay community's think tank dedicated to research and policy analysis on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.

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Queer Notes

By Jim Maynard

project due 12:30

Finally, one person in the United States is standing up and trying to hold George Bush accountable for his illegal war. Cindy Sheenan, the mother of a soldier killed in Iraq last year, is camped out near Bush's vacation "ranch" in Crawford, Texas demanding that he meet with her to explain the "noble cause" her son died for. As expected, the right-wing conservatives are viciously attacking Cindy Sheenan, as they have every other critic of this neo-conservative war (Richard Clarke, Joe Wilson, etc.). Many other families of current or dead Iraq war veterans have joined her and are speaking out against the war and calling

on the U.S. government to bring the troops home.

Bush is taking another long vacation in Crawford. He has refused to meet with Cindy Sheenan, but found time to go bicycle riding with Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong. He has a lot to deal with: the Iraq mess he got us into (more than 1800 soldiers killed and counting), Rovegate (Karl Rove and possible other administration officials leaking the name of CIA agent Valerie Plame as part of a smear campaign against her husband, Joseph Wilson, who exposed some of the lies used to justify the war) and

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falling poll numbers. According to recent polls, Bush's approval rating is down to 40 percent, the lowest of any second-term president. (Clinton was at 61 percent at the same period in his second term, even with the impeachment.) When will Congress bring this administration to justice and begin impeachment hearings against Bush and Cheney?

There are growing numbers of Iraq war veterans who are speaking out against the Iraq War; some are running for office as Democrats! Paul Hackett, a Marine Reservist and Iraq war veteran, narrowly lost the Ohio 2nd Congressional District House race to his Republican opponent (48-52 percent). What is amazing is that this district is overwhelmingly Republican, and shows that even Republican voters are questioning Bush's handling of the Iraq war. Hackett is not alone. There are many other Democratic veterans running for political office against chickenhawk Republicans who "avoided" military service.

It is amazing that even gay Republicans continue to believe the lie that Republicans are stronger on military and defense than Democrats, even when they voted for two chickenhawks (Bush and Cheney) who used family connections to dodge going to Vietnam, and voted against two Democratic veterans (Al Gore and John Kerry) who know more about military and defense than most Republicans.

The public is finally waking up and questioning Bush's lies. About the only support Bush has now is his base of right-wing religious fanatics. They still believe he is the messiah sent by God to save the world from godless liberals, gays and terrorists. Bush is learning not to make the mistake his father made by alienating the hard-core Republican base (the Religious Right). In addition to continuing his campaign to amend the Constitution to prohibit gay marriage, Bush continues to oppose stem cell research and recently defended intelligent design saying it should be taught in schools along with evolution, even though every major scientific organization rejects intelligent design and there has not been one legitimate scientific study to support it. Bush continues to push the agenda of the religious right like a true religious fanatic.

The Christian Right held "Justice Sunday II" in Nashville last month to attack "judicial activism" (i.e., gay rights). Like the prior Justice Sunday, the event was organized by the Family Research Council and other right-wing Republican organizations to build support for Bush's conservative judicial nominees. Speakers included Republican House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, James

Dobson, and former Dixiecrat Sen. Zell Miller (a Republican who continues to pretend he is a Democrat; Miller is the last of the old bigoted Dixiecrats who hasn't moved to the Republican Party). They all spoke out against "activist judges" and gay marriage.

Republican majority leader Bill Frist spoke at the last event, but was uninvited this time because of his recent change of position supporting stem cell research. Not to worry, Frist tried to win back the Christo-fascist vote by joining Bush to support teaching "intelligent design" as a legitimate scientific theory along with evolution.

Conservatives and the religious right are still enthusiastically supporting Bush's nominee for the Supreme Court, John G. Roberts, even though we learned that he did some pro bono work to help gay activists overturn Colorado's anti-gay Amendment 2 10 years ago. Apparently Roberts gave some legal advice to gay-rights advocates and helped them prepare their arguments to the Supreme Court, which upheld a Colorado court decision that overturned the amendment in the *Romer v. Evans* decision. This revelation took both gay-rights groups and their opponents by surprise. Most conservative and religious right groups dismissed the issue and only one radical right group (Public Right Advocates) has dropped its support.

It could be that Roberts was just giving free legal advice as part of his work for his law firm. Even if he turns out not to be as anti-gay as other justices, it should also be remembered that he supported the Boys Scouts exclusion of gays and defended the anti-abortion terrorist group Operation Rescue. Because of these and his overall pro-corporate opposition to labor rights, civil rights and environmental regulations, and opposition to the separation of church and state, progressives should oppose his appointment. There are reasons he has the broad support of the corporate elite and anti-gay conservative groups.

The main objective of the Christian Right is to dismantle the separation of church and state. This is the central issue gay rights advocates should focus on. All of the opposition to gay and lesbian civil rights, including marriage, is based on beliefs about the Bible and traditional Christian dogmas. We must defend the constitutional separation of church and state and defeat the Christo-fascists who believe the U.S. should be a "Christian" theocracy, or they may be executing gays here like they do in Iran and Saudi Arabia. Iran executed two gay teenagers last month, with little media coverage or public outcry in the United States.

Ophelia Ford narrowly won

the Democratic primary to fill the state Senate seat of her brother, John Ford. John Ford was crazy and had questionable ethics, but he was supportive of gay rights and voted against the state anti-gay marriage amendment. According to a questionnaire from the Memphis Stonewall Democrats, Ophelia seems to also be supportive so we may have one more ally left in the state Senate. She faces Republican businessman Terry Roland in the Sept. 15 general election. Local businessman Gary Rowe defeated three opponents to win the Democratic Primary for Kathryn Bowers' Dist. 87 House seat. It is not clear where he stands on gay issues, so we may have to educate him. He won with only 323 votes! That's how easy it is people to win local and state elections if we organize and support candidates who will support us.

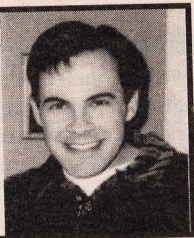
So far only one candidate has announced intentions to run for Harold Ford Jr.'s Dist. 9 U.S. House Seat — Nikki Tinker. Not much is known about her except she is a corporate lawyer and headed Ford's last re-election campaign in which he broke with the Democratic Party leadership and voted for the Republican anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment to counter Republican attacks in his campaign for the U.S. Senate. She described herself as a pro-corporate "centrist" Democrat like Ford. There will probably be many more candidates for the seat, and I am considering running myself if no other gay supportive progressive steps up. Someone needs to challenge the so-called "centrist" Democrats who have sold out the party base to win the support of conservatives and collect more corporate donations.

It is so frustrating to see how politically disorganized the Memphis gay community is. There is a lot of opportunity for us in the Democratic Party if we would just get involved and organize. Consider that the Democratic mayor (Willie Herenton), former Democratic Party chairs David Cock and Kathryn Bowers, state Senator Steve Cohen and state Representative Beverly Marerro have come to public events at the Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center. Not one Republican candidate or elected official has set foot in MGLCC. Get to work gay Republicans and prove that the Republican Party is just as supportive of gays as the Democratic Party. I challenge you to prove me wrong. It is time Memphis gays and lesbians spent as much time thinking and acting politically as they do drinking and partying.

See more Queer Notes at www.jimmymaynard.com

WHAT ABOUT IT?

by Shannon Yarbrough

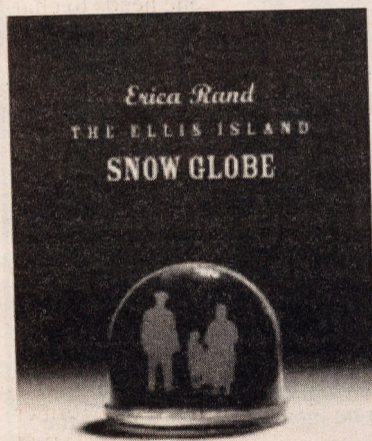


I am writing this review two days before I leave for vacation. Although I am only traveling three hours away to visit with my partner's family, it is the first time in over two years that I have actually taken a complete week off from work. Earlier in the year, we discussed a train ride out of Memphis to New Orleans with friends, or a road trip down south to Savannah, Ga. I think we even hinted at a week in Colorado.

However, after a lack of saving any money or making any definite plans on where we were going, a trip to Springfield, Mo. was soon sketched out. We can stay with family for free, camp or hike in Eureka Springs, spend a day in Branson to see a show or visit a theme park, and even Springfield itself has a bit to offer for the tourist in me.

So, it's a cheap, but at least eventful, vacation that I have come to look forward to. Above all, I am looking forward to spending more time doing what I love to do most in my free time: reading and writing. And for those of you out there with last minute summer vacations coming up (more planned out than my own I hope), here are three books worth taking along for the trip.

The Ellis Island Snow Globe



In *The Ellis Island Snow Globe*, Erica Rand, author of the smart and entertaining book *Barbie's Queer Accessories*, takes readers on an unconventional tour of Ellis Island, the immigration station turned heritage museum, and its neighbor, the Statue of Liberty. By pausing to reflect on what is and is not on display at these two iconic national monuments, Rand focuses attention on whose heritage is honored and who is obscured.

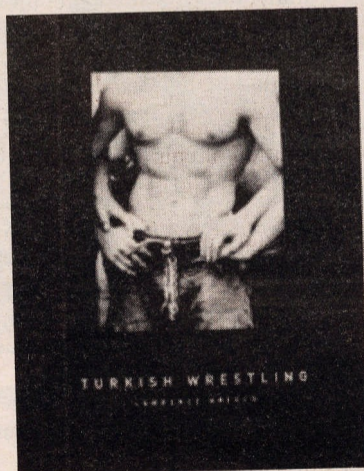
She also reveals the shifting connections between sex, money, material products and ideas of the

nation in everything from the ostensible father-mother-child configuration on an Ellis Island golf ball purchased at the gift shop to the multi-million dollar July 4, 1986 Liberty Weekend extravaganza celebrating the statue's centennial just days after the Supreme Court's un-Libertylike decision upholding the anti-sodomy laws challenged in *Bowers v. Hardwick*. Rand notes that portrayals of the Statue of Liberty as a beacon for immigrants tend to suppress the statue's connections to people brought to this country by force.

She examines what happened to immigrants at Ellis Island whose bodies did not match the gender suggested by the clothing they wore. In light of contemporary ideas about safety and security, she examines the "Decide an Immigrant's Fate" program, which has visitors to Ellis Island act as a 1910 board of inspectors hearing the appeal of an immigrant about to be excluded from the country.

Rand is a witty, insightful and open-minded tour guide, able to synthesize numerous diverse ideas — about tourism, immigration history, sexuality, race, ethnicity, commodity culture and global capitalism — and to candidly convey her delight in her Ellis Island snow globe. And pen. And lighter. And back scratcher. And golf ball. And glittery pink key chain.

Turkish Wrestling



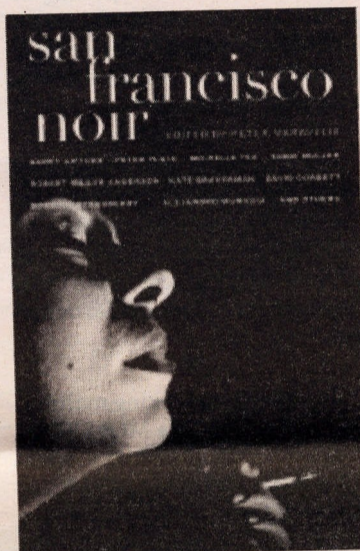
Turkish Wrestling is the first photography book ever to reveal the fascinating world of Turkey's oldest sport. Over a period of three years, fine art photographer Lawrence Grecco visited the KIRKPINAR championships, Turkey's equivalent to the World Series, and received special access to photograph the wrestling matches on the outdoor field where they take place.

The resulting archive of powerful black and white and color photographs transport the viewer to

this exotic realm of hulking men coated in olive oil, wearing only custom-tailored leather britches as they grapple with each other under a relentless Mediterranean sun.

From the initial journey to the contest's home in Edirene, a small town a few hours northwest of Istanbul, to the homoerotic oiling process, to verbal and visual descriptions of the three-day tournament's rousing climax, Grecco provides a portal to the past, and makes a compelling case for a Turkish vacation.

San Francisco Noir



A roster of Bay Area authors lends solid street cred to 15 original stories, but few deliver on the elusive noir premise of this new series. Following the success of *Brooklyn Noir* (2004), Akashic has launched a set of anthologies in which each story takes place in a distinct neighborhood in a different city. In his introduction, Maravelis perhaps overcomplicates the idea when he asks, "What happens when the history of a city begins to disappear? What happens to literature when it feeds upon the ruins of amnesia?"

Most of the stories — by Alejandro Murguía, Kate Braverman and others — feel as if they were written for a general literary anthology, all good enough but hardly satisfying as noir. Contemporary noir titan Jim Nisbet especially disappoints, with a vaguely science fictional vignette about a futuristic suicide barrier on the Golden Gate Bridge. Saving the day, Domenic Stansberry and Eddie Muller deliver genuinely haunting noir fiction; Michelle Tea does a nice modern-day homage to the form; and Peter Plate nails down the violently absurd Willefordian side of the genre with a tale about a bad Santa knocking over a pot club.

While mid-century L.A. noir

reflected the paranoia of the upper classes, these sleuths, perps, and victims are Bernal Heights hookers, Mission building inspectors and Chinatown militants. Marred by the sickening, sexualized violence that also attended its Brooklyn predecessor, this anthology nevertheless features strong liter-

ary voices.

Shannon Yarbrough lived in Memphis for six years. He is the author of the book, *The Other Side of What*. He now lives in St. Louis, Mo., where he is working on his second book. Questions or comments? E-mail Shannon at MisterYarbs@msn.com.

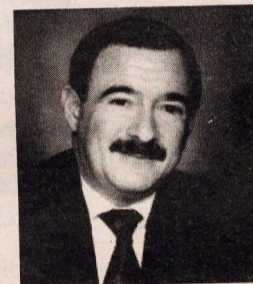
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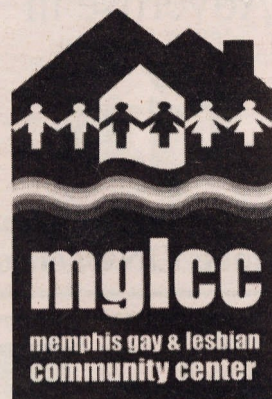
Community Corner

By Jeff Curbo
MGLCC Vice President

The new board of directors for the MGLCC met for the first time on Sun., Aug. 7. The members-at-large on the new board are Sonia Garner, Tommy Simmons, Daniel Slover, Robin Yow, Janet Watson, Charlie Weatherall and James Williams. The officers are Tuffy Keenan, secretary; Marty Katz, treasurer; Jeff Curbo, vice-president; and Len Piechowski, president.

At this meeting the board voted to appoint Herb Zeman to the board as a member-at-large pro-tem, thus filling one of the two vacancies resulting from the ratification of the new constitution and by-laws on July 17, 2005.

According to the bylaws of the



MGLCC, the board can vote to fill vacant positions pro-tem with the approval of the community at the next general membership meeting. The next general membership meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Dr. Zeman previously has served on the board for the MGLCC, but stepped down when he became the organization's landlord.

The 3rd Annual MGLCC Gaymes will begin on Oct. 2. The Gaymes is Memphis' version of a GLBT Olympics. Thanks to Nike for its in-part sponsoring of this year's events. For

more information about specific events and participation, check out the Gaymes advertisement in this publication or visit our Web site at www.mglcc.org.

The Cooper-Young Festival is just around the corner. The center will be open all day on Sept. 17 in conjunction with the C.Y. Festival. Please stop in for complimentary snacks and refreshments.

MGLCC's OutFlix Festival ran from Aug. 11-14. This year proved to be one of the most successful years for the event. More than 200 people attended this year's event, and viewed 16 GLBT-themed films. In excess of \$1,500 was raised during the event.

Special thanks to the generous donors who helped to make the festival one of the best ever: Herb Zeman, Mark Jones, Corey Taylor, Neshoba Unitarian Universalist Church, H.O.M.E., Family Flavors Movie Rentals and Pride Essentials, Verizon Wireless, and the Media Co-op!

MGLCC is especially grateful for the hard work by this year's OutFlix committee in putting together another successful event. Thanks to Mark Jones, Herb Zeman, Tommy Simmons, Will Batts and Stan Parker.

As part of its goal of incorporating the entire community, the MGLCC is seeking bilingual individuals to volunteer at the center. Individuals fluent in any other language are encouraged to volunteer.

In addition to seeking multilingual individuals, the MGLCC has begun a monthly diversity meeting called Children of the Rainbow. Held the second Wednesday of every month from 7-8 p.m., the meeting focuses on increasing sensitivity to and inclusiveness towards people of all cultures, religions, genders, sexual orientations, etc. to truly make the Center welcoming to the entire Mid-south community.

Sheridan Lambe, LCSW

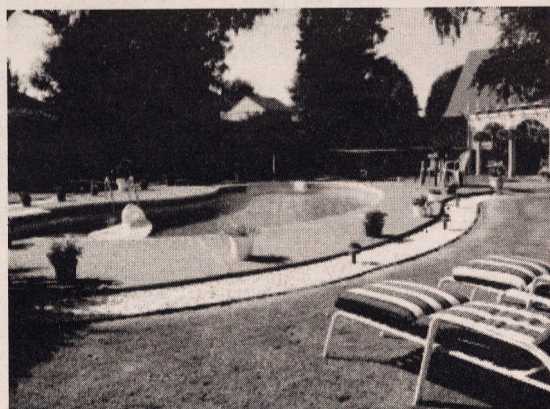
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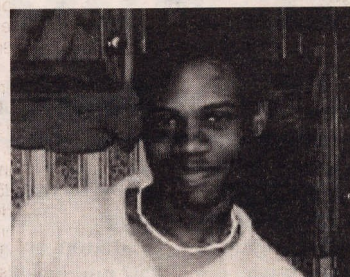
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More pictures of house are available in AOL profile.

In Loving Memory



Vanduras "Van" Hopson

July 5, 1984–Aug. 18, 2005

By Marc Woveris

From Marc, Sabian, Chris, Brent, Herschel, Patrick, Ken and everyone who was your friend and/or coworker:

He left us too soon, just as we all were so used to him being in our lives and enjoying his presence. He made us smile with his kindness and sweetness.

He made us laugh with his humor and his funny side. He was the most innocent of us all, and never judged anyone for any reason.

He made my life and everyone's life so much better with him being just being part of it. He was the best friend anyone could ask for and the most unselfish and caring person that everyone wishes they could be like. He meant so much to so many and will always mean something good in our lives.

He came to Memphis for a purpose, a reason, not by accident. I personally believe it was destiny that brought him here. Destiny... to enrich our lives, to make us better people, and to make us smile. I believe it was destiny that made him a part of us, and that we became part of his life as well. He was kind to all those who knew him and cared for us all. He came here by his own choice to start a new life outside of Meridian and, in a year's time, made many friends — all of whom will never forget him.

Van would do anything for anyone and listen to anyone without judgment. He was so sweet and kind that anyone that knew him, liked him very much.

Customers would speak highly of him almost as if they'd known him for years. They did so by just seeing him smile and by him speaking so kindly and with such sweetness. He taught us all to be kinder and more caring of others and brought us all closer to each other. We hope that his death was not in vain, and that it will in the long run make us stronger and better, because his life made us more fulfilled and complete. He was proof that we are all essentially the same no matter the color of our skin, our religion, our sex, our age or our sexual orientation. We are all humans, all brought here to this earth, and we should all enjoy our lives instead finding reasons to hate one another.

I can tell you that Van made my life more positive and every time I was around him he made me smile and laugh. I was so used to him being a part of my life.

I will never forget what he meant to me and neither will anyone else who knew him. My life is a little more empty without him being there, but I know he is with all of us in spirit and that he would have wanted us to be happy.

We all grieve about his death and cry knowing he has left this earth, but we celebrate how much he meant to us all and all the good times we had with him.

Goodbye sweet, loving Van. From all of us who you got to know, we hope that we made your life better, as much as you made ours better.

Thank you for being who you were and what you meant to us all. If God brought you to us, I hope that he brings you happiness wherever you are now.

If there is a heaven, we all hope that you will be happy there and that you will not forget us... we sure will never forget you. We promise to be more like you, and to learn from you and grow from the experience of knowing you.

My heartfelt condolences to the Hopson family. You raised a great son, and I hope that you were proud of him and all that he was. I am so glad I got to know him, and will always remember him in my heart. He truly was one of a kind, and he meant so much to everyone. Your son was a kid any parent would be proud of and love to have as a son.

Van, you will be missed by me and every one of us you ever met. You will never be forgotten.

Calendar Listings in Bold type take place at GLBT venues or are specifically GLBT-related.

Calendar Listings in non-bold type take place at GLBT-friendly venues or are of interest to the GLBT community

Out & About

REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES

- Open Heart Community of Faith - Bible Study & Worship Celebration - North End of First Congregational (1000 South Cooper) - (901) 323-3514 - 9am
- **Holy Trinity Community Church - Sunday School and Holy Worship Service & Children's Church - (901) 320-9376 - office@holyltrinitymemphis.org - 9:45am and 11am**
- First Congregational Church - Sunday School, Café Congo, and Worship Service - (901) 278-6786 - 9:30am, 10am, and 10:30am
- Prescott Church - Sunday School & Worship Service - (901) 327-8479 - 9:30am & 10:45am
- **Living Word Christian Church - Morning and Evening Worship Services - (901) 452-6272 - 10am and 6pm**

WEDNESDAY CHURCH SERVICES

- Taizé - First Congregational Church - (901) 278-6786 - 6pm
- **Holy Trinity Community Church - Fellowship Supper and Bible Study - (901) 320-9376 - office@holyltrinitymemphis.org - 6pm & 7pm**
- Living Word Christian Church - Worship Service - (901)

452-6272 - 7pm

- Open Heart Community of Faith - "A Course in Miracles" - Study Group - North End of First Congregational (1000 South Cooper) - (901) 323-3514 - 7:30pm

SUNDAYS

- Softball - Toby Fields (Central and Hollywood) - 1pm
- Tea Dance - Metro - 4pm
- **Brothers & Sisters Bowling League - Winchester Bowl - (901) 722-5236 or MemphisGayBowlin@aol.com - 6pm**
- Pool Tournament - Pumping Station - 6pm
- Sissy Bingo - Crossroads - 8pm
- After Park Set Sundays - Paragon - 9pm
- Queer As Folk - Metro - 9pm
- Lights Out, Everything Goes - J-Wag's - 10pm
- Drag Show - Backstreet - 11pm

MONDAYS

- Monday Night at the Movies - Sponsored by Holy Trinity Community Church - Bartlett Cinema 10 - 6:45pm - Details at www.HolyTrinityMemphis.org
- Pool Tournament - The Jungle - 7:30pm
- Dart Tournaments - One More, Pumping Station - 8pm

- Karaoke Night - Metro - 10pm

TUESDAYS

- Women's Rugby Practice - Audubon Park - 6:30pm
- Phoenix AA - Open AA group - Grace-St. Luke's Church, 1790 Peabody - 8pm
- The Caring Group - Relaxation and de-stressing by subtle energy practices - Holy Trinity Community Church - (901) 320-9376 - 7pm
- Phoenix AA - Open AA Meeting with outreach to GLBT community - Grace-St. Luke's Church - 1720 Peabody - 7pm
- Lesbians with Breast Cancer - Support Group - YWCA (766 South Highland) - 7pm
- Singles Dart Tournament - Crossroads - 7:45pm
- Pool Tournament - One More - 8:30pm
- Karaoke Night - Metro - 10pm
- Karaoke Night - J-Wag's - 11pm

WEDNESDAYS

- Frontrunners 3-mile run, Overton Park Pavilion, 6pm
- Dart Tournament - The Jungle - 7:30pm
- Partners Dart Tournament - Crossroads - 8pm
- Lights Out - Come Party in the Dark - Metro

SEPTEMBER 2005 COMMUNITY CALENDAR

				1 • Thursday Night at the Gaiety Film Series, MGLCC, 7pm	2 See regular Friday events • Cafe Q, MGLCC, 7pm featuring Amy Steinberg	3 • Bicycle Club, MGLCC, 2pm • Alliance Club Night, Pumping Station, 10pm
4 • Lavender Greens, MGLCC, 2pm • WAC, First Congregational Church, 6:30pm	5 • Plus Support Group, MGLCC, 7:30pm	6 • The Caring Group, HTCC, 7pm • The Drum Circle, MGLCC, 7pm • Phoenix AA, 1720 Peabody, 8pm	7	8 • Thursday Night at the Gaiety Film Series, MGLCC, 7pm	9 See regular Friday events • Cafe Q, MGLCC, 7pm	10 • Bicycle Club, MGLCC, 2pm • Blue Suede Bears Club Night (See bluesuedebeers.com)
11 • Stonewall Democrats, MGLCC, 2pm • Brothers and Sisters Bowling, Winchester Lanes, 6pm	12 • Plus Support Group, MGLCC, 7:30pm	13 • The Caring Group, HTCC, 7pm • The Drum Circle, MGLCC, 7pm • Phoenix AA, 1720 Peabody, 8pm	14 • Children of the Rainbow (Intercultural Discussion Group), MGLCC, 7pm	15 • Thursday Night at the Gaiety Film Series, MGLCC, 7pm	16 TJN October Advertising Deadline See regular Friday events • Cafe Q, MGLCC, 7pm	17 • Bicycle Club, MGLCC, 2pm • Tsarus Club Night, The Pumping Station, 9pm
18 • Mid-South Gay and Lesbian Republicans, MGLCC, 1pm • Unity Pagans, MGLCC, 3pm • Brothers and Sisters Bowling, Winchester Lanes, 6pm	19 • Feast for Friends, First Congo, 6pm • Plus Support Group, MGLCC, 7:30pm	20 • Integrity Meeting, Calvary Church, 6:30pm • The Caring Group, HTCC, 7pm • The Drum Circle, MGLCC, 7pm • Phoenix AA, 1720 Peabody, 8pm	21	22 • Thursday Night at the Gaiety Film Series, MGLCC, 7pm	23 See regular Friday events • Cafe Q, MGLCC, 7pm	24 • Bicycle Club, MGLCC, 2pm
25 • I:F (Initiative Fairness), MGLCC, 5pm • Brothers and Sisters Bowling, Winchester Lanes, 6pm • WAC, First Congregational Church, 6:30pm	26 • Plus Support Group, MGLCC, 7:30pm	27 • The Caring Group, HTCC, 7pm • The Drum Circle, MGLCC, 7pm • Phoenix AA, 1720 Peabody, 8pm	28 • MGLCC Volunteer Appreciation Potluck, MGLCC, 6pm	29 • Thursday Night at the Gaiety Film Series, MGLCC, 7pm	30 October TJN Due Out See regular Friday events • Cafe Q, MGLCC, 7pm	

- THURSDAYS**
- Thursday Night at the Gaiety - GLBT Film Series, MGLCC, 7 p.m.
 - Cotton Pickin' Squares - Holy Trinity Community Church -

- (901) 438-2427 - 7:30pm
- Dart Tournament - J-Wag's - 8pm
- Karaoke - Paragon - 9pm
- Karaoke Night - Allusions Entertainment Center - 9:30-

- 11:30pm
- Star Karaoke - Crossroads - 10pm
- Amateur Show - Metro - 11:30pm

FRIDAYS

- First Congo Films - First Congregational Church - (901) 278-6786 - 7pm & 9pm
- MGLCC Coffeehouse Nights - Community Center - (901) 278-4297 - 7pm
- Seriously Sober - Holy Trinity Community Church - (901) 320-9376 - 8pm
- Karaoke - One More - 8pm
- Pool Tournament - Crossroads - 8pm
- Ladies Night - Allusions

Larry Timmerman

Bill Johns

Antique Warehouse Mall

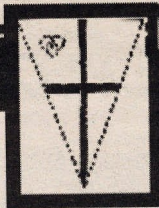
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- Worship Service**
11:00AM
- Wednesday Night Study**
7:00PM
- Thursday Evenings**
Cotton Pickin' Squares

HOLY TRINITY COMMUNITY CHURCH

THE REV. TIMOTHY MEADOWS, M.DIV., PASTOR

- Entertainment Center - 10pm
- Late Nite Beer Bust - Pumping Station - 10pm
- Drag Show - Backstreet - Midnight
- Drag Show - Crossroads - Midnight
- Drag Show - J-Wag's - 3am

SATURDAYS

- Frontrunners 2-mile run, The Pier parking lot (Union and Riverside), 9am
- Women's Rugby Practice, Harbortown Greenbelt Park on Mud Island - 9am
- Live and Let Live on Cooper St. - MGLCC - 278-4297 - 7 pm
- Pool Tournament - J-Wag's - 9pm
- Drag Shows - Crossroads - Midnight, - Allusions Entertainment Center - 10:30pm & 12:15pm



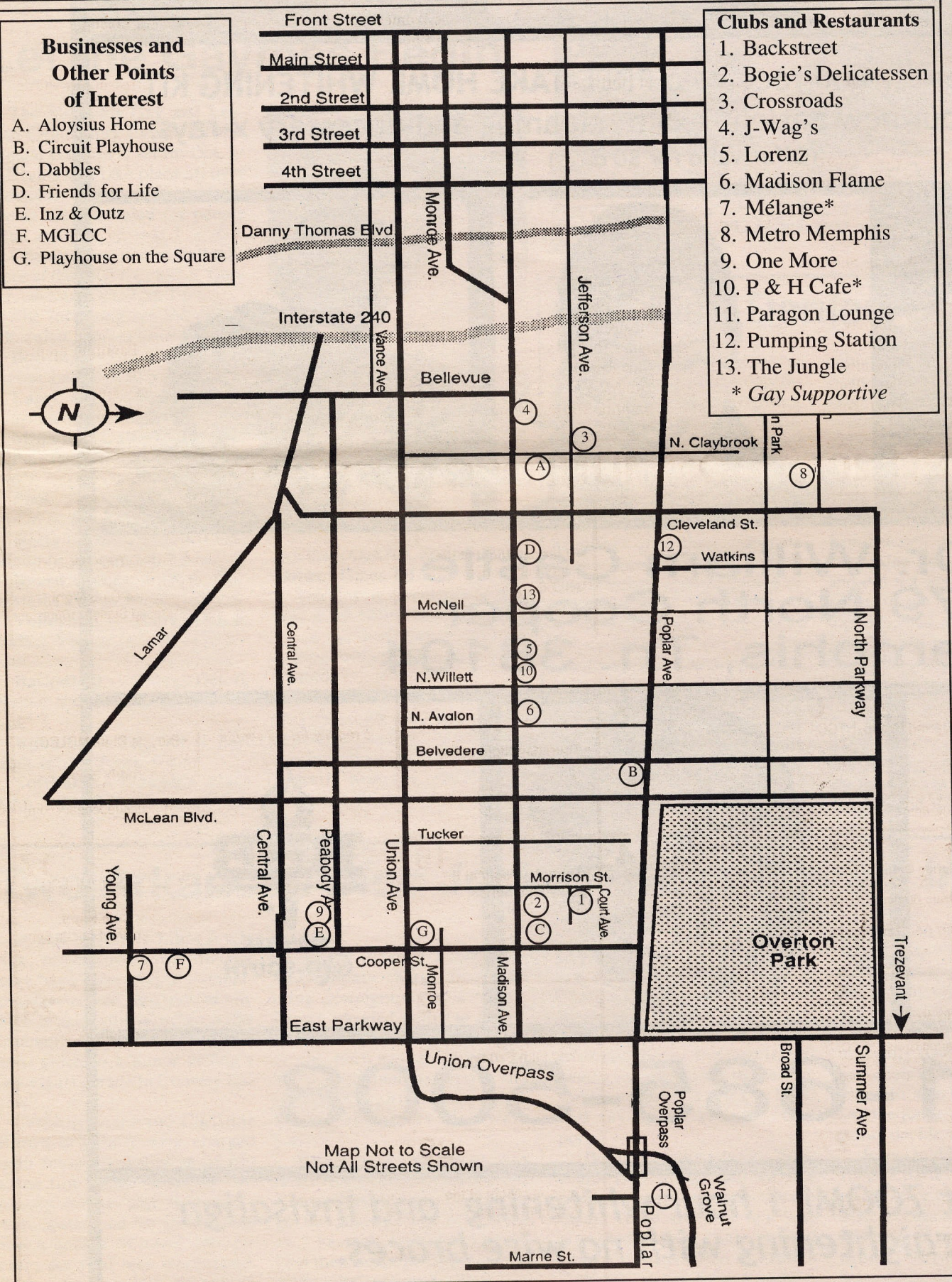
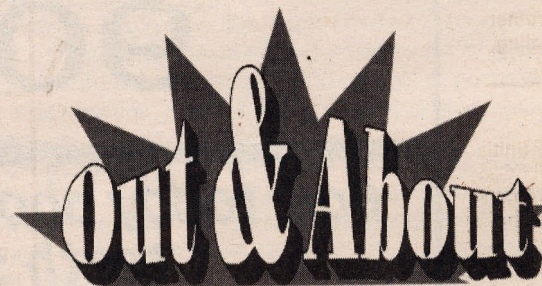
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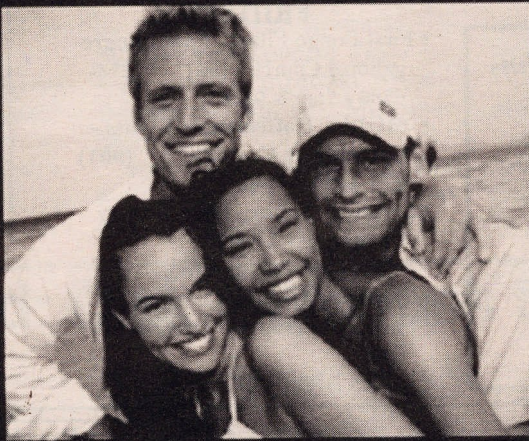
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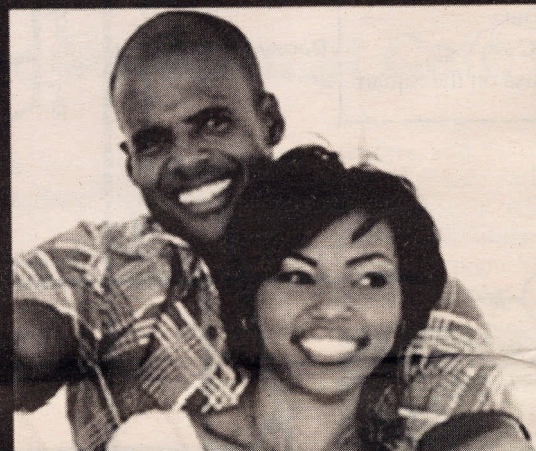
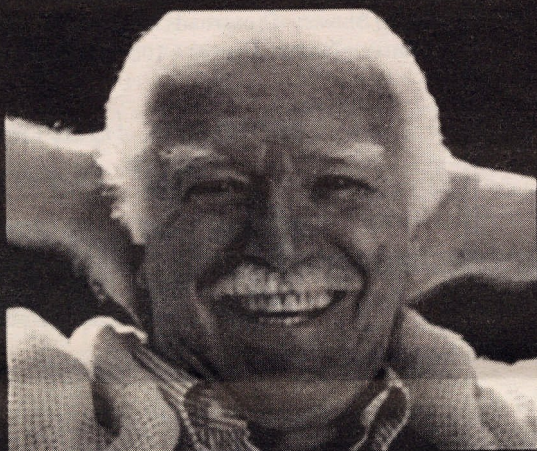
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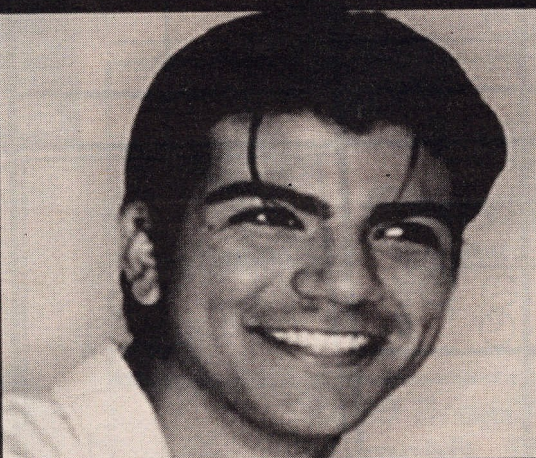
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