

AFFINITY

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Have you moved? Are You moving soon? Call (303) 771-7169 or e-mail: AlaninDen@aol.com

1996 Affirmation Conference — October 11-13

Keynote Speaker—Carol Lynn Pearson. She has been revered by the larger Mormon community for many years with her inspiring books of poetry. She has endeared herself to the gay and lesbian community with her wonderful book *"Good-Bye I love you"* and her one woman play *"Mother Wove the Morning."* She has a message of love and courage especially for us. She is an inspiration to hear. Other speakers will include the best of Affirmation talent and an additional surprise guest.

Entertainment—Romanovsky & Phillips. This musical Comedy Duo has entertained gay & lesbian audiences for a generation. They have been billed as "delightful and entertaining Ambassadors of Homosexuality." They have been called "one of the funniest musical acts in the country, whose music, humor, and message crosses all barriers." We are in for a great treat! It will be worth it to attend the conference just to be entertained by them.

Workshops—Exciting, in-depth and proactive are a few words to describe the workshops/seminars planned for this conference. There will definitely be a seminar just for you. Up to 12 different workshops are planned and each will be unique and worthwhile.

Devotional—A very special devotional is planned to end this years conference. It will set the standard for all future Affirmation Conferences. Bring your box of kleenex and be prepared to bask in our own special brand of sister and brotherhood.

Palm Springs—Warm sunny days and hot steamy nights. This is one of the top gay and lesbian resorts in the world. Cathedral City on a Saturday night is a gay dream. Arrive early and stay a few days longer to enjoy this great relaxing desert location. Palm Springs in itself is a great reason to attend!

And Much More—There will be the moving and solemn Affirmation/LDS AIDS Quilt. There will be a Friday poolside reception with a new twist. There will be a quiet moment with a friend from last year. There will be fun and frivolity in the pool. There will be singing of a favorite Mormon hymn. There will be seeing Imelda again. There will be the joy of a quiet prayer. There will be relaxing and renewing in the desert sun with great company. There will be wonderful things in store for you at this Affirmation Conference.

Join with your brother and sisters, your family and friends, for a weekend of renewal and love in the desert. It worked for Moses!!!

LETTERS TO OUR READERS

Dear Readers,

Is it possible that the reason some folks are asking to have other gatherings is that the Affirmation National Conference is not addressing their needs?

What would the "agenda" for such gatherings be like? Can some of the issues that folks would like to address in another gathering be addressed at the national conference?

Is it possible that some of the groups that want to have other meetings could address their needs in workshop sessions? If participants in a workshop felt that there was enough material to warrant additional time, discussion, etc. they could continue on an ad hoc basis at the conference. If they wanted to have a retreat, the planning and organizing could start at the conference.

It has been my experience, that conferences and retreats are really just a catalyst for something much more important and powerful. The real magic of such events is what happens between people. When I look at an agenda for a retreat or workshop, it sometimes feels as though we need to fill time. The best part of such activities is usually the interactions that are unstructured. The structure is just an excuse to make some of those interactions more likely.

I would hazard a guess that the reason the gamofites are so enthusiastic about their retreats is not the organized activities but rather the interpersonal connections that are made. Sometimes the greatest danger is in structuring time so that the interpersonal interactions are no longer possible.

For me, the bottom line is let people vote with their feet. Try it and see what happens.

Steve

Dear Readers,

Steve G (posted on Q Saints) wrote to provide a list of the workshops for the upcoming conference. I appreciate the hard work that goes into getting the workshops together. It looks like there is a lot there for a wide variety of interests. Thank you Steve and all the others who have and are helping.

I was especially interested in one of these workshops:

"BUNGEE JUMPING FROM GRACE
Mormons don't fall from grace, they bungee jump...often times into abuse and addiction. How to balance rejection of the Word of Wisdom with moderation. Possible wine tasting."

I find this topic particularly relevant because it seems to deal with a phenomenon that to me appears endemic to gay (male, since that is great bulk of my experience) LDS who are in the process of coming out/leaving the church. Typically, male gay Mormons seem to move from close adherence to a religion and a lifestyle that is very controlled and rigid, to the opposite (extreme), where almost anything and everything goes, with no principled basis for making choices other than rejection of the past. Mormonism itself, I think, engenders this kind of dynamic, because it fosters black and white, either/or thinking. Internally, I think people in this pattern believe either they are good and worthy and thus conform to standards that appear to evidence this, or they believe they are bad and unworthy, and do likewise. "Bungee jumping" into destructive patterns of behavior is not unusual at all.

Mormons appear generally extremely ill-equipped to deal with complex issues of exploring the dynamics of their faith, their religion and their sexuality in hopes of reconciliation or integration. This comes as no surprise to anyone

who knows that the general focus of religious education in the church is at the 3rd grade level, the "lowest common denominator." The usual solution, because simpler and more accessible, is to jettison everything. I'm not criticizing anyone's choice, because I appreciate how difficult the task of dealing with Mormonism as a gay person is. However, overall, I think we don't do a good job of it, not as individuals, nor as an organization.

Anyone reading this can guess that I am not satisfied with an alternative that locks me into an either/or option of embracing my faith or my sexuality. My own approach for now has been to find what I can that is helpful and good in the gospel, while cultivating those things that deep within me I am convinced are true. I also try to make associations and connections that will help me move in the direction that I want to go, pursuant to my beliefs.

Recently, at a social event someone not a member asked me why as I gay man I belong to the church. She couldn't imagine what possible reason I would have to identify as Mormon. She also wondered why I didn't drink and "live it up" more, especially since I've already rejected what she perceived to be a fundamental truth of the church (viz., that homosexuality is evil).

See BUNGEE on page 6

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

1996 MORTENSEN AWARD--CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

It is time once again to call for nominations for Affirmation's highest honor, the Mortensen Award. The award is presented each year at our annual conference to an individual who has served Affirmation in an outstanding manner during the past year.

The criteria for selecting a nominee should be:

- (1) Someone who is dedicated to the goals of Affirmation and has worked toward achieving them.
- (2) Someone who has shown outstanding leadership and service.
- (3) Someone who is a self-starter and a motivator of others. And,
- (4) Someone who is "making a difference" in the lives of others.

We ask that you look all around in Affirmation to find that one outstanding individual and then submit a nomination to the selection committee. The nomination should be in the form of a letter describing the individual and listing all the reasons this individual is qualified and should be selected.

Do not submit just a name. We need to know something about the individual since the committee may not know him/her well.

The nominations must be received by September 15, 1996—no exceptions! E-Mail them to the Mortensen Award Committee at the Affirmation address above. The nominations will be narrowed to three finalists who will each be recognized, and the winner announced, at the conference in Palm Springs on October 11-13. The selection committee is made up of past recipients of the award. They are Paul M., Clifford B., Ina Mae M., Irwin P., Ron K., Larry G., Rick F., Jacki R., Theresa L. and James K.

Be sure and show this letter to everyone in your area. You may be the one who should be nominated and you may not want to nominate yourself.

If you have any questions, e-mail us here. We look forward to seeing you at the Palm Springs conference which is certainly going to be a great event. Please start thinking about this award today and get your nomination in tomorrow.

Thank You,

Mortensen Award Committee Members

A Gay Mormon Wedding

On a hill overlooking the Puget Sound and the City of Seattle, two of our own exchanged vows of commitment and love and were sealed together forever by their love and their friends and family members this past weekend.

Scott Mackay and Michael Lambert met at the Seattle Affirmation just one year ago. Michael, dressed in "low drag" <GRIN> as Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz was delivering "Dorothygrams" when he kept having to deliver the mail to Scott and they finally made a connection—a connection that now has been publicly celebrated.

A lot of rhetoric surrounds gay and lesbian weddings. The rhetoric comes from within and without our community. But, seeing the sight of Scott's five daughters escorting their father and new step-father down the "aisle" of the wedding garden brought tears of pride, joy, and celebration. Marriage is about love and family. Those five daughters, with smiles a mile wide and beauty radiating for all to see, showed by their simple acts of love and support that the pundits can all go to hell—This is about LOVE first and foremost. And, love is Beautiful.

I will never forget the first queer Mormon wedding I ever attended in Las Vegas as Carmen and Jane were joined together forever by their love for one another and their friends surrounding them on the beginning of that journey. On that day, Scott Mackay, stated how much he desired a man to stand with and make public vows, to take home to his daughters and share a family together. Scott visualized his miracle and it has come true.

Michael, the oldest of six Lambert children, thought his dreams of being a parent died with his coming out, with the realization that he was gay. Yet, there on that holy ground of the wedding garden, he promised to love, support, and care for these young women and their father.

See WEDDING on page 4

SPIRITUALITY

It's Not the Critic Who Counts

It seems as if we swim in a sea of family, friends, work colleagues, Church leadership, commercial advertising and political commentators that claim to know us better than ourselves, and what is best for us.

Here is some of the commentary that well meaning people have said to me . . . "It's time for you to stay home and start dating" . . . "If you'd lose some weight, more people would find you attractive" . . . "How can you associate with that snake, he's so untrustworthy" . . . "You need to 'get over' Affirmation" . . . "How could you consider yourself to be gay if you don't call yourself a Democrat?" . . . "Only name brands can guarantee quality" . . . "The Church must be exposed as the evil hypocritical organization that it really is" . . . "You think you are better than us because you do not go clubbing" . . . "You know the Church is true, you know the will of God, and you know that a homosexual lifestyle is wrong" . . . "You are so boring" . . . "It's not that I have a problem with drag, but what would visitors and new members think of our [Affirmation] group?" . . . "You're being selfish" . . . "You need to go to Church and set a good example for all those closeted gays and lesbians in your local ward" . . . "How can you drink alcohol and still call yourself a Mormon?" . . . "James, you need to be a little more discrete" . . . "Maybe if you found the right woman, you could go straight" . . .

President Theodore Roosevelt put it very well when he wrote:

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deed could have done better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who

knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if she fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

For the first 30 years of my life, I lived other persons' dreams, I fooled myself into believing they were my own. It was a safe world of absolute values—except they were not my values, even though once upon a time I so very much wanted them to be my values.

So here I am with my fears, my temper, my bitchiness, and my fat, excelling in some areas of my life, and falling flat on my face in other areas. BUT I AM ALIVE! And although I'd rather be dead than 'special', I AM ME! In my own way, I am trying to live the 13th Article of Faith:

We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all [people]; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

God bless all of you!
Love, James Kent

WEDDING from page 3

I send my congratulations to the new couple and wish you all had been able to witness this wonderful event. May many more of us have the courage to stand before family and friends and vow to love a partner some day—Love makes a family.

Rob Killian
settled in Tacoma, Wa.

Thanks for the fine account of the moving and important moment. Scott and Michael were lucky to have such a fine reporter memorializing their exchange of vows. And the report of the five daughters seeing their father off into this new family brought smiles into my early morning.

Thanks—RJC

CONGRATULATIONS SCOTT AND MICHAEL



FAMILY ISSUES

Families Press for Employment Non-Discrimination Act

(Diversity—6/1996)

Washington—Almost 200 parents and friends of gay men and lesbians from all over the country traveled to the U.S. Capitol to lobby for a bill to prevent discrimination in hiring, firing and promotion based on sexual orientation, according to the Human Rights campaign.

The parents—members of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays—came from at least 27 states, according to Michael Roybal, HRC's chief of legislative counsel.

They lobbied members of Congress on behalf of the employment Non-Discrimination Act, a bill that would protect Americans from job discrimination based on sexual orientation. ENDA would prohibit discrimination, quotas and preferential treatment on the job. It would not apply to religious organizations, small businesses or the military.

"Getting our message from families to members of Congress is critical to EDNA's chances," Roybal said. "Our polling has shown that most people are not aware that people can be fired from their jobs just for being gay or lesbian, and that most Americans think that is unfair."

A May, 1995 poll found that 74 percent of Americans favor preventing job discrimination against gay people, but that 80 percent are not aware that gay people are not covered by current civil rights laws.

The parents also took part in a welcoming reception at the White House and a congressional briefing with officials from HRC, PFLAG and members of Congress.

"Anti-gay job discrimination hurts families," said HRC Executive Director Elizabeth Birch, "and these outstanding parents are here today to let Congress know that their gay and lesbian sons and daughters deserve the same basic equal rights in the workplace that most other Americans already have. It's a family issue, and these families are leading the way."

ENDA currently has 131 co-sponsors in the House and 30 in the Senate. ENDA has been endorsed by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the nation's largest civil rights coalition, representing more than 185 religious, civil rights, and labor organizations. Numerous corporations have also endorsed the bill, including Quaker Oats, Apple Computer, Harley Davidson, RJR Nabisco, and Xerox.

Last October, President Clinton endorsed ENDA, making him the first president in history to support a national bill to include gay people in basic legal protection from discrimination. ENDA's lead co-sponsors in the 104th Congress are Senators James Jeffords, R-Vermont, and Edward Kennedy, D-Massachusetts.

Gay couple earns "Foster Parents of the Year" award

A gay couple from Eldora, Iowa received an award as "Foster Parents of the Year." Gair Bridges and Ron Travis received the award from the Iowa Foster and adoptive Parents Association for their role as foster parents to 13 children since 1989. The couple adopted one of the children two years ago.

Anti-gay activists are opposed to permitting same-gender couples to be foster parents.

The state does not ask questions about a foster care applicant's sexual orientation, according to Mary Nelson, of the Department of Human services' Division of Adult, Children and Family Services.

Nelson said couples who apply to become foster parents must be able to provide a stable and safe environment for children. They must provide an adequate income and living space for the child. Officials also check applicant's criminal background and record on child abuse.

Affirmation 1996 National Conference Vendors' Form

As you know, October is approaching rapidly and the National Conference will soon be here. The committee has been busy planning all the exciting activities and workshops for several months now. As part of our planning process, we want to include vendors during the Conference weekend. We are aware that many members of Affirmation have gay and lesbian pride items that they desire to sell to the Conference attendees. This letter is to invite vendors to participate this year in Palm Springs.

The National Executive Committee has established the procedure of charging vendors a fee to participate at the conference site. This year the fee is \$15.00. There will be an area set up central to the conference activities where all vendors will be locating their various items.

See VENDORS on page 7

HEALTH

BUNGEE from page 2

AIDS risk in transmission— two in a million

Washington Post (06/27/96) P. A16

The risk of contracting HIV through a blood transfusion is estimated to be two in one million, according to a study reported by George B. Schreiber of Westat, a research company in Rockville, Maryland. HIV antibodies in blood from newly infected donors may go undetected by blood banks because it takes about 22 days for the body to generate detectable levels of antibodies. Schreiber and colleagues evaluated records from 586,507 repeat donors to estimate how many newly infected people give blood during the 22 day period. Their results, and another study about the source of hepatitis C in blood donors, were published in June's issue of *New England Journal of Medicine*.

HIV

Accelerated in "closeted"

Homosexuals Science News (06/22/96)
Vol. 149, No. 25, P. 391; Bower, B.

Gay men with HIV who keep their sexuality hidden from the public develop AIDS and die more quickly than those who are open about being gay, a new study found. Steve W. Cole, psychologist at the University of California at Los Angeles, says there is no clear explanation for the effect, but suggests that men who conceal their homosexuality may suffer decreased immune function. The study, which followed 80 homosexual men for nine years, was published in the May-June issue of *Psychosomatic Medicine*. It found that men who were the most determined to conceal their homosexuality experienced serious losses of immune cells and developed AIDS 1.5 to two years sooner than men who were more openly gay.

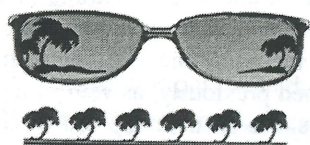
Implicit in her questions, of course, was the idea that once you've made a distinction in one area, that all areas are up for grabs. That is exactly what I reject, because I find it very harmful. That is a 3rd grade level answer. Such childish thinking has helped lead too many gay adult LDS males into harmful patterns of self-hate and destructive addictions.

Having said all that, I want to close by stating that I still have ambivalence about what my involvement in Affirmation means to me. I have been active to varying degrees over the last almost 10 years. I have made many wonderful friends in Affirmation. But I have watched as Affirmation has slowly moved further, not closer, to dealing with the deeper spiritual issues that I think remain unsolved and unaddressed in the lives of so many who feel the painful either/or conflict pulling at them. Affirmation, unlike *every other* gay and lesbian religiously-affiliated group, offers no explicit, direct religious activities (worship, prayer, spiritual events, etc.). Instead, Affirmation slips further and further into the safe confines of the purely social, distancing itself further from any links to the LDS religious identity. Till several years ago, alcohol was not served at Affirmation events. Rejection of the Word of Wisdom (aptly named, I am convinced, considering the massive problems that alcohol consumption creates) now appears to be taken for granted. I used to find Conference refreshing because it was one of the few places in the gay world where alcohol was not at the heart of the activity. I am genuinely perplexed and conflicted when I see Affirmation officially sponsoring alcohol at our events. The official Mission Statement of Affirmation reads like a bland Unitarian treatise, and reflects virtually nothing of the positive religious truths that I believe the Mormon tradition represents. Affirmation is rushing headlong to make everyone comfortable, and be everything to everyone. In the end, I fear, it becomes nothing to anyone. I am not surprised anymore that we simply do not grow.

As I stated when I started out, I remain ambivalent about Affirmation. I am pained by the things I described above, but I am also grateful for the many good things and the many good people I have known in Affirmation. I have appreciated the chances I have had to serve, and the current position I hold as interim PR director. I will continue to do the best I can to serve Affirmation. But I also know that I must pull back on my involvement, because after all this time I am convinced that Affirmation is not what I hoped it would be. I don't need another club to make friends and socialize. I can get that anywhere. I do want a place where my LDS and gay identities could both be affirmed. Affirmation, I regret to say, has yet to become that place, at least for me.

—Rick

UPCOMING EVENTS



Palm Springs '96
International Conference
October 11 - 13

AFFIRMATION - Gay and Lesbian Mormons
P.O. Box 46022 • Los Angeles • CA • 90046 • USA
(213) 255-7251



GAMOFITE Retreats

If you're interested in joining Gamofites, please know that you are welcome to join us. You'll find we offer an opportunity to associate with Gay Mormon Fathers in an environment of unconditional Love and Acceptance. For general information about Gamofites, please contact Scott Mackay at (714) 998-2052 (or Email: smackay@dhvx20.csudh.edu).

Sept 20 - 22, GAMOFITE East III

VENDORS from page 5

The conference committee will also set up signs that will indicate to the conference participants where the vendors are located, hopefully this will resolve past issues of vendors feeling as if their location was not well known to the conference participants. The central location should also help with this issue.

All persons wishing to sell items during Conference weekend must let the conference committee know in advance. The attached registration form needs to be completed and postmarked no later than September 11, 1996, one month prior to Conference at the Erawan Resort.

Please share this information with the members of your chapter. If you need extra copies of this registration form, feel free to make additional copies.

Thank you. We look forward to seeing everyone in Palm Springs.

Sincerely,
Palm Springs Conference Committee

Name _____
Address _____

Telephone Number _____
Brief description of the item(s) that you are going to be selling at Conference: _____

About how much space do you think that you will need?
(i.e., how many tables, etc.) _____

Send this form with the fee to:
Attention—Affirmation Conference Committee
P.O. Box 46022
Los Angeles, CA 90046

AFFIRMATION NEWS

Tom Peterson's Memorial (by Lowell)

Tom Peterson was remembered at a memorial service held in Pasadena, California on June 12, 1996, attended by about 40 persons. Tom passed away quietly at his home in Hollywood on June 8, from complications of AIDS. Tom is survived by his companion, Angel, his mother, siblings, and other relatives in South Carolina. His sister represented the family at the memorial service.

Tom was born December 1, 1959, in South Carolina, into a family with a long history in the South. Tom was proud of his Dixie heritage, and Angel spoke of how Tom would talk of his hometown of Cowpers [sp?], and the role it played in the Civil War. Tom's ancestors were also some of the earliest converts to the LDS church when missionary work resumed there after the Civil War. They joined sometime around the turn of the century, and were a stalwart family in their local branch.

Tom served a mission to Las Vegas, Nevada from 1979 to 1981. Following his mission he moved to Atlanta where he lived for a few years before coming to Los Angeles in about 1985.

Tom became involved with Affirmation almost immediately after his arrival in L.A., and served for several years on the LA Chapter Board of Directors[and National]. He gave many years of dedicated service, and spent many hours on the telephone counseling with people who had called the Affirmation line for help, support, or advice. He is widely remembered for his happy, positive outlook and his ability to blend his Mormon heritage and his sexual orientation. For many years, Tom attended the Hollywood Ward, and had a positive attitude toward the LDS Church and a firm testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. This is especially admirable and noteworthy considering he was excommunicated from the Church in the early 1980's.

The memorial services were presided by Tom's life companion Angel, who opened time to those present to share their memories. Tom's sister told of his childhood, the "Tommy" that she knew, and of the special bond the two of them had built, often seeming the only ones who really "understood" each other. Other's remembered Tom's ever present smile, the hours of time that he joyfully gave to others, his unmatched spirituality, and his love for children. Paul M. said it seemed that Tom had an open line to God, and reminded all of us of the special efficacy that Tom's prayers had. I was reminded of the miraculous healing of a small child from a lesbian couple who attended Affirmation several years ago; a blessing that came quickly after Tom and a companion laid their hands on

the child's head and pronounced a priesthood blessing.

Tom loved children, and was something of a godfather or special uncle to many of the Affirmation's children, including the children from the couple mentioned previously, as well as my own two daughters. He spent many fun-filled hours playing with them and baby-sitting! (He used to call us to ask when he could baby-sit. I wonder how many others he did that for???) Most recently, Tom was able to hold Tere and Jacki's new daughter, Kassandra, before his death, and it buoyed his spirits so much that the doctor, on his next visit, asked what had made the change?

Tom's memorial service was a very upbeat and positive experience—very fitting for the man it honored. Music included "Wind Beneath My Wings," and the country western hit song, "I've Got Friends in Low Places." Angel said this was Tom's favorite and that Tom once had worn it out on him by setting the CD on permanent repeat mode so that Tom could teach Angel a line dance to it. It's the first time (probably the last) that I've heard this song at a memorial service, but it was appropriate, and I'll never hear the song again without thinking of Tom.

Tom became well known and loved across the country as he attended conferences, served on committees, and participated in activism in various places. We will miss Tom immensely, but he will always be with us in our memories and in our hearts. In all likelihood, he will continue to watch us from the other side of the veil, and who will be there to gently prod and guide us. Anytime I mention Affirmation in a bar, I will remember that it was Tom who taught me that it was a great place for missionary work. I know of several "closeted Mormons" who were discovered in bars because of Tom's eagerness to share what he had.

Thank You Tom, for all you have given us. May we honor your memory by following your example of service and spirituality.

God Bless,
Lowell

CULTURAL HALL

Everyone,

I just got this post from the publicity person regarding Michael Quinn's book—read as follows, and yest, the Church is has been trying all it can for the past three months to keep the book from being published.

—Duane

Sigh We're still struggling along with this—but there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel. Unless another misguided lawsuit comes our way (!) books should arrive sometime in the first week of August. Our lawyers felt we would win the latest one—if we wanted to piddle around in court and spend umpteen thousand dollars and delay the book interminably. As it really dealt with a minor matter, making no difference to the content of the book whatsoever, we decided to comply just to get the book out. As more noise is made about this book however, the more the orders increase—and I just hope we printed enough! Please let those who are patiently waiting know that it is on its way (if I have to sling cartons on my back and **carry** them to the bookstores!).

HOUSE PREVENTS GAY DIVORCE

Rob Morse
San Francisco Examiner

My marriage has been threatened by a lot of things, including arguments, marathon silences, raging hormones (mine), midlife crisis (mine), dirty clothes piles (hers) and occasional failure (mine) to wash the backs of plates.

My marriage has never been threatened by Bob wanting to marry Ted, or Carol getting engaged to Alice.

Now, with the passage of the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act," the House of Representatives has saved the battered institution of heterosexual marriage. Let the marriage counselors of America, the ones who aren't in Congress, join the unemployment lines.

If the bill passes the Senate, gay couples won't be able to share the joys of government-sanctioned connubial bliss. They'll have to decide who takes out the garbage without benefit of marriage licenses.

Oh, yeah. And American civilization will be saved.

And now a word about some of the legislators who saved the institution of marriage and America.

See **DIVORCE** on page 11

Love Makes A Family : Living in Lesbian and Gay Families

(Diversity, August 1996)

"A family is a bunch of people, or not so many, who love each other," explains seven-year-old Liza, who lives with her two moms, Stacey and Amy. Liza's family is one among twenty-five families represented in the photograph-text exhibit, *Love Makes A Family: Living in Lesbian and Gay Families*.

In this traveling exhibit, photographs by Amherst photographer, Gigi Kaeser depict a variety of all races with gay and lesbian moms, dads, grandparents, and/or youth. Accompanying each photograph is text edited from interviews with family members conducted by writers, Peggy Gillespie and Pam Brown. Together, the words and the images show the strength, support, and love within these families.

The exhibit is touring nationwide to universities, libraries, churches, museums, and community centers. *Love Makes A Family: Living in Lesbian and Gay Families* is under such high demand that six copies of the exhibit were made and currently touring to places including Duke University, Yale University, Purdue University, Princeton University, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Amherst, Massachusetts Public Schools, the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center, Colorado Equality, etc.

According to Sandra Gillis, Executive Director of PFLAG, "*Love Makes a Family: Living in Lesbian and Gay Families* reminds us all that the fundamentals of love and support are to be found in all types of families, including gay and lesbian families. At PFLAG, we find that ignorance about gay and lesbian people is the greatest barrier to strong and healthy families and communities."

This past spring, the exhibit was the subject of a raging, four-month long public controversy and brought to court by right-wing attorney, Greg Hession, who sought to prevent the exhibit from being hung in the Amherst, Massachusetts elementary schools. His suit was unsuccessful in Federal court. The exhibit has now been seen in three of the four elementary schools in town.

For information on bringing this exhibit to your community, please contact Peggy Gillespie, P.O. Box 1209, Amherst, MA 01004-1209, or call (413) 256-0502, or send email to FamPhoto@aol.com.

POLITICAL

Dear religious activists,

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network is assisting several servicemembers caught in an antigay witch hunt at Hickam AFB, HI. I would greatly appreciate it if you could help distribute, respond to this outrage. Thank you.

SLDN ACTION ALERT

***URGENT:

YOUR HELP NEEDED***

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, the only national organization dedicated to assisting military personnel hurt by the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" policy asks for your IMMEDIATE help in stopping a witch hunt in Hawaii. SLDN is currently assisting servicemembers caught up in a witch hunt of suspected gay military personnel in Honolulu, Hawaii. The investigation began when one Air Force member was criminally convicted and told that he would receive a reduced sentence if he produced a list of male servicemembers and accused them of consensual gay sex. At least seventeen servicemembers across all service branches have been targeted. Military prosecutors at Hickam Air Force Base, in particular, continue to question servicemembers about their own sexual orientation and that of others, in violation of the current "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue" policy. Because of the on-going purge of suspected gay servicemembers, one servicemember has already been separated, two are awaiting discharge and at least one other servicemember faces the very real threat of court-martial and jail-time if convicted.

The witch hunt continues despite months of working within the system to end it. The Department of Defense, the

Air Force and Hickam Air Force Base have failed to respond to numerous inquiries made over the last several months on behalf of the accused servicemembers by SLDN and the members' Congressional representatives.

It is clear that the only avenue left to these servicemembers is a massive public response on their behalf and they ask for your help now.

Calls are URGENTLY Needed, in order of priority, to

The Honorable William Perry, the Secretary of Defense, voice: (703) 695-5261; fax: (703) 695-1219; mail: 1000 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-1000.

General John G. Lorber, the Commander of the Pacific Air Forces, voice: (808) 449-1711; fax: (808) 449-9520; mail: HQ PACF/cc 25 E Street, Suite G-214, Hickam AFB, HI 96853-5420

The Honorable Sheila Widnall, the Secretary of the Air Force, voice: (703) 694-7376; fax: 703/693-7553; mail: Air Force Pentagon, Room 4E871, Washington, DC 20330

The four things callers should say are 1) that a witch hunt is being conducted at Hickam Air Force Base against servicemembers suspected of being gay, 2) that the caller understands that the office they are calling is aware of the witch hunt and has done nothing to stop it, 3) that they are outraged that people's lives and careers are being ru-

ined because of violations of the "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue" policy and the civilian and military leadership is allowing it to happen, and finally, 4) that something must be done to immediately stop the witch hunt and protect those unjustly pursued.

It is essential that these calls go out immediately. Please pass this action alert on to others and encourage them to call those listed above. If possible, please email SLDN at sldn1@aol.com so we can keep track of how many calls are made.

THANK YOU—SLDN

Open Lesbian defeated in Congressional Primary

WASHINGTON, DC—In a heartbreaking finish, Victory Fund Congressional candidate and Maine State Senator Dale McCormick lost the June 11 Democratic Primary for Maine's First District seat in the U.S. Congress. Seeking history as the first open lesbian to win a major party primary for the U.S. House of Representatives, Dale was defeated by former Portland Mayor and 1994 guber-national candidate Tom Allen. In her concession speech, McCormick endorsed Allen and called for unity in the fight to defeat ultra-conservative GOP incumbent James Longley.

Longley has scored high ratings from groups like the Christian Coalition, and his anti-gay record in Congress has earned him a 0 (out of 100) rating from the Human Rights Campaign, and a "hostile" rating from the National Log Cabin Republicans.

Although disappointed with the final outcome,

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Victory Fund Executive Director Clarenbach believes that McCormick's race represents a huge leap forward in our community's quest to elect an openly gay non-incumbent to Congress. "You have to remember that the first openly gay candidate ran for office in 1961, and it took 13 years before an openly gay candidate finally won election," Clarenbach says. "Politics is a progression, and Dale's campaign has brought us closer than ever to breaking through the Lavender Ceiling which has denied our community equal representation."

Clarenbach says that Dale's defeat makes it even more crucial that the national gay and lesbian community rally behind the Victory Fund's other highly qualified Congressional candidate, Rick Zbur (CA-38). [Long Beach Environmental attorney Zbur made history in March as the first openly gay non-incumbent to win a contested Congressional Primary (CA-38). He faces an extremely tough battle against two-term Republican Congressman Stephen Horn in the November 7 general election.]

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Rep. Bob Barr, R-Ga., the sponsor of the bill, declared on the floor of Congress that "the flames of hedonism, the flames of narcissism, the flames of self-centered morality are licking at the very foundations of our society, the family unit."

Barr ought to know about family units because he's been married three times. And he knows about the licking flames of hedonism too. He once was caught licking whipped cream off the chests of two buxom women.

Of course, that's OK, because it was disgusting straight sex, not disgusting gay sex. However, it was shockingly high in fat grams. Then of course you have the speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., whose idea of tradi-

tional family values was to visit his cancer-stricken first wife in the hospital to say he was leaving her. Paying guys like this to defend marriage is like paying Bonnie and Clyde to guard your bank.

That's what we're doing—paying meddling politicians to deal with nonexistent problems. More precisely, to make problems.

They're trying to make problems for Bill Clinton, and turn him into the best man of the gay marriage party. It's a desperation move by Republicans saddled with a dud candidate for president. As Sen. Ted Kennedy said, this should be called "The Defense of Endangered Republicans Act."

President Clinton responded in true form, out of both sides of his mouth. He said he opposes discrimination against any group of Americans, but will sign the bill because he "has long opposed gay marriage." Another guy whose advice on marriage we need. The backers of the anti-gay marriage act say they're saving American civilization—you know, the heterosexual civilization that brought us Al and Peggy Bundy.

Rep. Steve Largent, R-Okla., who used to run around and get smacked in the head by NFL free safeties, said, "No culture that has ever embraced homosexuality has ever survived." Steve, no culture has ever survived. They all decline and fall. Homosexuality somehow stays with the human race, though. Largent seems to have been referring to ancient Greek culture, as represented by pederastic philosophers who live on in the Western Civilization courses conservatives love so much.

So Greek culture doesn't live on? What was the Olympic flame all about? Think Greco-Roman wrestling, Steve.

For the first time, the federal government has tried to define marriage. Legislators who claim to favor states' rights, religious freedoms and individual rights are overregulating intimate human relationships. The House has forbidden citizens to peaceably assemble as man and man in their own bedrooms. The House that treasures the right to keep and bear arms can't bear two women legally in each other's arms.

The problem with most Washington politicians is that they're so busy boozing and bimboing that they've never seen a gay relationship. They should do some field work in San Francisco, where the only normal people on the average block are gay couples.

I live in a bungalow that was occupied for 45 years by two women, easily the stablest relationship for a radius of three miles. On my old block the two gay men next door were quiet, loving, neat and owned a successful small business. The other neighbors included a psychopathic heterosexual redneck couple who kept a .357 Magnum stashed in their broken dishwasher, and a zoned-out heterosexual hippie couple who grew pot in a house with so many grow-lights it glowed like something from "The X-Files." Everybody else was single and lonely.

Congress should ensure domestic tranquility, not prevent more perfect unions. If they want to save marriages, they should pass a law requiring that the backs of dishes shall always be washed.

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