



NEWS & VIEWS

Free to Members and Subscribers

December 1998

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The Triangle Community Center, Inc. a non-profit Connecticut corporation, exists to provide services to give the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender community a sense of identity, pride and visibility, as well as to work with the greater Fairfield County community to foster understanding and awareness of lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender issues.



TCC's Holiday Friendraiser!

TCC's monthly Friendraiser for December will be held on December 20th from 2 to 6 PM. Roy and Terry have hosted our holiday Friendraisers for the last four years and have graciously shifted their busy schedules to allow the tradition to continue. Food and beverages will be provided. Come to their gayly decorated home and help us celebrate the holidays!

DIRECTIONS:

Via Merritt Parkway - SOUTHBOUND: take Exit 34, Long Ridge Road. At the light at the end of the exit ramp, make a left on to Long Ridge NORTHBOUND: take Exit 34, Long Ridge Road. At the end of the exit ramp, make a right. You will then be on Long Ridge Road.

Go for one mile, through 6 lights (including the blinky one). At the 7th light (which is the one mile point), make a right. Do NOT go to extreme right which goes up a winding hill. Go up hill which runs right by the nursery (watch for the blue "H" signs for the hospital). The road you are on is Stillwater. Take Stillwater (its winding) for 1.7 miles, through 3 lights (including the blinky one). At the fourth light, where there is a Christian Science Church on the left, make a left turn on to Bridge St. Take Bridge St. until the first right turn, which is Hubbard Avenue. After you go through one traffic light on Hubbard the third house on the right is number 42, a white center-hall colonial.

Via 95 - SOUTHBOUND: take Exit 6, West Avenue. At the light make a right onto West.

NORTHBOUND: take Exit 6, Harvard Avenue. Go through one light (Harvard Ave). At the next light make a left onto West.

Take West until it ends and make a left onto Stillwater, which curves around to the left of a large field and school. At the next intersection make a right turn onto Broad Street. Take the first light which is Hubbard, and make a left. The 4th house on the left is number 42 as described above.

WHEN in doubt follow blue signs for hospital (H) - The address again is 42 Hubbard Avenue, Stamford. Phone (203) 348-2954 if you get lost.

"Holy Order! The sisters are brothers!"

"Hilarious!"

-Liz Smith
The Triangle Community
Center presents



"Sensational!"

"A Hit!"

-USA Today

Directed by
Scott M. Robbins
A Benefit Produced by
TCC

A portion of the proceeds supports
BREAD & ROSES
For Tickets: 203-855-1485
\$35.00/ \$50.00 MasterCard/Visa
includes post show reception

January 15, 16, 21, 22, & 23, 1999 at 8PM
Norwalk Community Technical College
Performing Arts Center
188 Richards Avenue, Norwalk

Nunsense A-Men! – an all new, all male version of the smash play "Nunsense" is coming to Fairfield County in January 1999. Five performances are set for January 15, 16, 21, 22, 23 at 8 PM, at Norwalk Community Technical College's Performing Arts Theatre on Richards Ave. in Norwalk off Connecticut Turnpike (I-95) exit 13. Tickets are \$50 and \$35 for the show and include a post-show reception. Tickets may be obtained by calling (203) 855-1485.

Nunsense A-Men! features comedy, gags, and music, with songs ranging from tender to hand-clapping torrid. The director is Scott M. Robbins. The cast includes: Arnie Cuarenta of New York City as Sister Leo, Scott Fabri of Fairfield as Sister Hubert, Joe Guttadauro of Norwalk as Sister Robert Anne, Edward James Hines of Norwalk as Sister Amnesia, and Al Recchia of Stratford as the Reverend Mother.

The musical director is Stephanie Datimer and the choreographer is Kathy Hellrigel both from Norwalk. The set has been designed by scenic designer Barry Axtell of New York City. Patty Blackwood's puppet - the puppet from the original Nunsense - will be featured in the Norwalk performances. The Westchester Broadway Theatre and the Helen Hayes Theatre of Nyack, NY, also are assisting in the Norwalk performance.

Elliott Arluck, the show's producer, said that the corporate sponsors of the production include Virgin Atlantic Airways, People's Bank, and Café 168 (168 York St., New Haven). The hotel Millennium Bailey's of London has donated a room for two for a raffle in conjunction with the show.

TCC NEWS

Board Acts on Town Meeting Ideas

TCC held its annual Town Meeting on October 4th and out of that meeting came several productive and positive suggestions. Below are some of the suggestions and what the Board has done to implement them.

Suggestion - New site for TCC

Response - Dave Carroll, Michael Pavlicin and Lester Sharlach have volunteered their expertise and are working overtime to help find a new home for TCC. They have looked at several locations but found them unsuitable for various reasons. Legal advise is being provided at no charge by attorney Vickie Ferrara. A big THANKS to all!

Suggestion - TCC should get an 800 or other telephone number so that calls to the Center are local. Get the phone staffed

Response - Inquiries were made with SNET concerning an 800 number. But because of our eminent move, plans for the number have been put on hold. Voice Mail boxes are now available to callers providing TCC's purpose, directions to the Center and a list of upcoming events. Caller messages are picked up daily.

Suggestion - Have open board meetings regularly.

Response - An open board meeting was held on October 20th. Two TCC members attended and offered several ideas for Board members to consider. No date has been set for the next open meeting.

Suggestion - Have more frequent Town Meetings.

Response - The Board supported the idea of having quarterly Town Meetings but a final decision was not made.

Suggestion - Have mailboxes for each group that meets at TCC.

Response - Mailboxes for every group have been put in place. Announcements are placed in the boxes for facilitators to read at their meetings. There is also a place for suggestions.

Suggestion - A Volunteer Committee chair is desperately needed.

Response - Karen Jastermsky, TCC's newest Board member, is the new chair for the Volunteer Committee and is working with Denny Burke on a campaign to get more volunteers.

Suggestion - TCC should have more potlucks.

Response - Potluck suppers have been added to TCC's Movie Night.

Suggestion - Women need to be included in theatrical productions.

Response - Unfortunately, this cannot be done for this year's production of Nonsense because of contractual stipulations but women will definitely be needed next year.

Suggestion - News & Views should publish a list of what the Center needs in terms of volunteers as well as items.

Response - The items needed by TCC are now being published monthly in News & Views under the headline: Wish List.

Suggestion - There should be more Center-wide activities.

Response - TCC has begun this task by hosting a Friendraiser at the Center in November. It was open to all.

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Going to a party?



Time to don that gay apparel you keep in the back of your closet!

Les/Bi/Gay/Trans Spiritualities

Explore your spirituality in a supportive group environment. The group will determine its own structure and direction (though with guidance and suggestions as needed). We will meet every other week to support one another in defining our own spirituality and looking at how who we are individually and as a member of a sexual minority influences our spirituality. Facilitator: Marion Visel, M. Div. Marion is a candidate for the Unitarian Universalist ministry and graduate of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. She is a member of the Triangle Community Center. The group will meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month. Their next meeting is December 9th from 7-9 PM at TCC. Contact: Marion Visel (203) 250-7933.

Common Danbury Ground Holiday Calendar

We invite all gays and lesbians to our December programs!
Tuesday, Dec. 8 - Noted author and educator **Dan Woog**



discusses his recently published book "Jocks," about gay male athletes. Dan is openly gay and a soccer coach at Staples High School in Westport, CT. A warm and engaging speaker, Dan will be discussing his experiences as an educator and a proponent of gay youth. Join us at 7:30 at the Unitarian Universalist Society

in Redding, CT.

Tuesday, Dec. 15 - We'll meet at the Gathering in New Milford from 7-10 PM.

Tuesday, Dec. 22 - Our Holiday Potluck dinner will be held at 7 PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Redding. We'll prepare the ham and you bring your favorite dish.

Common Ground is an association of Bi and Gay men who wish to meet in a welcoming and convivial setting for social events of interests. We meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at the Unitarian Universalist Society Building in West Redding, CT.

Directions to the Unitarian Society:

North on Route 7 from Norwalk/Wilton past the famous Stonehenge restaurant on the left, and up hill to traffic light - and right at the light onto Picketts Ridge Road. Drive along the winding road about a quarter mile to the Unitarian sign on the left - into the driveway and park. The potlucks are in the white house on the left of the drive. Use the rear entrance and up the stairs.

Exit I84 from Danbury onto Route 7 South and drive past Triangles Café and about one half mile past the split of 35 into Ridgefield (don't take it). Turn left from route 7 at the traffic light onto Picketts Ridge and follow above directions. For more information and weather announcements please call (203) 743-5731.

Lesbian Lit Group

For their December 1st meeting, the Lesbian Literature Group has chosen the novel, "Ferocious Romance" for discussion. The author, Donna Minkowitz, described her book saying that it deals with, "what my encounters with the right taught me about sex, god and fury." Copies of the book are available at local bookstores and libraries. The Lit Group meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at TCC beginning at 7:30 PM. For more information call Christine at (203) 847-8476.

TCC Fiction Writing Group

Behind every beginning is a story. The story behind the creation of the TCC Writer's group is an old one. It begins with the lofty ideas of dreamers (like myself) who still believe in the possibility for positive change in a world where chaos is the only constant. As I sat down to write about this group for the TCC newsletter, I asked myself the reason behind my desire to bring Gay and Lesbian writers together at TCC. And the answer that came to me was a simple one: Freedom.

Only last night, I was sitting in front of a Holocaust survivor who had gathered all of her strength during the years when a piece of her soul died along with all of her family members and the first time she decided to tell her story to those willing to listen. As I listened to her, my mind sat quietly - paralyzed by the pain of my heart. There are horrors that cannot be filtered by the mind, comprehended by the heart. Atrocities so great, words can only ram themselves against the flat surface of our understanding like birds flying into glass panes. When she finished her story, she paused and looked at the handful of us gathered in a small classroom. As I sat waiting for her to speak again, I knew that she wanted to tell us one more thing, maybe a word or phrase that would distill her story into something that could be held, contained within our understanding. And that's when she said the words that I need to remind myself daily on my ongoing journey as a writer and lesbian: "You are all still young, with a long life ahead of you. The most important thing in life second to your health is your freedom." She is right. But I know that there are varying degrees of freedom or captivity for that matter, varying breadths of space within which we can express ourselves, grow and continue to change into the person we truly are. Within the Gay, Lesbian and Transgender community, we are constantly confronted with these varying degrees of captivity where our identities are rebuffed and slammed against the impenetrable wall of the norm. But we must remember that freedom begins with a clear sense of self and a lucid and limpid voice that rings true. Writing can be a powerful way to uncover the chamber where that voice echoes.

The TCC Writer's group is dedicated to creating a safe and supportive creative forum for the exchange of ideas for all courageous TCC members who are willing to uncover, discover, recover their voice through the pen. Silence = Death. Never have these words carried so much meaning as in the life of a silenced writer. There is a writer in all of us. Not all writers are artists nor are all artists writers, yet everyone has a voice. However distant, faint or muted, your voice can be unleashed through the power of the written word. Whenever I conduct writing workshops, I like to express to people that writing has saved my life and indeed it has.

The goal of this group is to create a safe haven for writers to come together and share their work and ideas about writing with each other. Although this is not a place to learn how to write *per se*, this group welcomes all who are willing to explore the realm of writing and able to read and review the work of other writers with respect, support and gentleness. It is up to the members of the group to come to a steadier definition and structure than those stated here. The only bona fide rules of the group are mutual respect and non-competitiveness. Having the courage to share one's self through the written word is an act of generosity. But it takes a certain type of reader to be able to receive this gift fully - it requires gratitude, respect and a lot of love. I look forward to meeting all of you writers out there interested in writing and sharing your fiction in this light.

Contact Information: The group will be facilitated by Mona de Vestel. Meetings will be held twice a month (the second and fourth Tuesday of every month) at the Triangle Community Center from 7:30-9:30 PM. The first meeting will take place on Tuesday November 10th at 7:30 PM. For more information, please contact Mona: (203) 863-1553.

A couple of words about the facilitator: Mona de Vestel is a novelist living in Stamford. She has recently completed her first novel *Idols* (currently looking for an agent) and is at work on her second novel (untitled). Mona has given many readings in places such as Barnes and Noble, Tower Books, Cornelia Street Café, KGB Café and the Gay and Lesbian Center in New York City. Mona has conducted a number of writing workshops in NYC, the Catskills and Vermont. She was also the facilitator of a Weekly Novel Writing Group for three years in Manhattan.

Correction to Nov N&V's: TCC's revenue and expenses numbers should be...

Total revenue	\$27,076.22
Total expenses	(\$29,444.91)
Net Total (Deficit)	(\$2,368.69)

Movie Night and Potluck



Bring your cute little self and food for four to this month's Movie Night at TCC. The film for December is "Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss". The Los Angeles Times described the movie as, "bold, witty and hilarious!" It all happens on Sunday, December 13th at TCC. Food at 6 PM and film at 7 PM.

It Takes a Whole Village to Raise Our Children

Children From the Shadows (CFS) invites YOU to participate in CFS VI: It Takes a Whole Village To Raise Our Children Too! It takes a Whole Village to Raise Our Children Too will be held on Friday, March 19 and Saturday, March 20, 1999 at the University of Hartford in West Hartford, CT. More than 2,500 students, teachers, social workers and others have attended CFS since its inception five years ago. With more than 80 workshop choices, ranging from professional level presentations to facilitated discussions, interactive exchanges, networking and entertainment, the conference offers something for everybody. Registration fees are \$15 for one day/ \$20 for both days for youth and full-time students; \$45 for one day and \$60 for both for adults and include lunch, all workshop choices as well as entertainment and a youth dance on Saturday. Work exchanges and scholarships are available.

It takes a whole village to raise healthy, productive, happy lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. It takes our children themselves - those who are fierce, fabulous warriors for change, those who are still too frightened by a hostile world to venture out, and those who stand somewhere in-between. It takes our elders - those who have come before us to light the way with their passion, their bravery and their vision of how the world might be... It takes our families of origin and our families of choice; our civic, political and our religious leaders; our mental and physical health care providers. We need them all to understand and participate in the development and maintenance of our health and well-being. We need YOU!

YOU can participate by sharing your expertise as a workshop presenter or facilitator; by attending as a participant who wants to learn more and help make a difference; by volunteering to help as an organizer or a conference angel. For More Information: Call: 1-888-565-5551, e-mail: CFSshadows@Juno.com or write: CFS, PO Box 1855, Manchester CT 06045.

Outwrite

The annual Outwrite conference, a gathering of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered writers, authors and journalists, will be held from February 26-28, 1999, at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston, MA.

The conference in past years has brought such top names as Tony Kushner, author of "Angels In America," and publishers, editors and reporters from mainstream newspapers and magazines as well as gay and lesbian publishers. The event, sponsored by Gay Community News of Boston, will include seminars and workshops on a wide assortment of topics related to gay publishing. Representatives of publishing companies will be there to discuss book proposals.

Among those present last year was Kirk Read, then editor of *Our Own*, the gay newspaper in the Norfolk-Portsmouth, VA area, and who is now a columnist and free-lance reporter based in San Francisco. For more information about Outwrite call (617) 262-6969, extension 3 or fax (617) 267-0852. Snail mail is 29 Stanhope Street, Boston, MA 02116.

Coverage of Matthew's Death

By Michael Collins

Finally a gay bashing death was given the coverage it deserved in the mass media, with the vicious murder of a young Wyoming student, Matthew Shepard in October. Several years ago a gay man was murdered in Texas and stabbed dozens of times, and I recall seeing only one tiny wire piece about it. And I never remember any other gay death receiving full coverage in the way other hate crime deaths have been covered.

With all the anti-gay rhetoric this past election year by the right-wing Republicans, I think at least some or even much of the public saw the connection between the heightened atmosphere of hate this rhetoric created, and the tragic death of Matthew. This may have been one factor in the results of the November 3rd elections. Many of the Republicans who went down to defeat were right-wing Republicans, such as U.S. Senator Lauch Faircloth of North Carolina, Jesse Helm's evil twin.

The Triangle Community Center (TCC) of Norwalk responded, and I spoke to a number of newspapers and appeared on various broadcast media, thanks to cooperative efforts of News & Views editor Michele Stone, TCC president Donald Buxton, TCC founding president Justine Michaud and Meg Bachtel, the public relations department of Quinnipiac College of Hamden, and others. The gist of my comments were that Matthew's death was the kind of crime that happens - his skull smashed and his body pinned to a fence - when you have the top man in the U.S. Senate - Trent Lott - calling gay people kleptomaniacs, or you have U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia saying in an official decision that animus (animosity) toward homosexuals is a good thing, as he did 2 years ago in his dissension in the Colorado referendum ruling. It creates an atmosphere, and sends a signal to the haters that it's okay to bash gays.

I appeared on the front pages of the New Haven Register and the Connecticut Post and made this point. The same night I saw U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman and he had seen the Register piece and thought the quotes were excellent. I also appeared on a morning talk show broadcast Wednesday October 14, 1998 for a full half hour on WNLK 1350 Norwalk and WSTC 1400 Stamford, and was able to talk extensively about TCC and what services it offers, as well as Matthew's death. At 12 noon I appeared with Connecticut Civil Liberties Union president Joseph Grabarz on David Smith's Exchange on Newsvision 12. Then the following Sunday the Stamford Advocate had a major front page piece, and TCC founding president Justine Michaud, author Dan Woog and also actor Dan Kelley, all from TCC, were quoted extensively. On November 1st, a vigil was held at Fairfield's First Church Congregational to mark Matthew's death, and bring attention to the issue of bigotry and I, as TCC public relations director, invited the media, WTNH Newschannel 8 led with the story and when I was interviewed, TCC received full display on the screen. It is reassuring to see that the life of a gay person does count, and that a hate crime against a gay person does count as much as an attack against someone for racial or religious reasons. That is a significant step, I believe.

On November 15, the Westport Unitarian Church held a major vigil, featuring multiple speakers and the Connecticut Gay Men's Chorus. TCC president Don Buxton helped arrange this, along with Rozanne Gates and Suzanne Sheridan, both of the Rainbow Task Force.

I spoke at the service. My comments included, "we should constantly remind people that Jesus never mentions homosexuality, but specifically condemns divorce and remarriage. While I understand why divorce happens, the right-wing Republicans justify their gay-hatred by saying they take the bible literally. Well, they do not. They even elevate those living the divorce-and-remarriage "lifestyle" to the presidency! We should say to these hypocrites: 'Was Jesus kidding when he condemned divorce and remarriage? How can you support Congressman Barr, Gingrich, Arney, Ronald Reagan, Dole, and many others? Was he kidding when he condemned being judgmental, and said the GREATEST commandment is to love your neighbor as much as yourself?'"

Right-wing leader and commentator Paul Weyrich said, "Homosexuality is the highest sin." It says this no where. We are letting them get away with their agenda of bigotry with our failure to respond to their lying and deceitful arguments. We allow them to cherry-pick verses from the bible to persecute a vulnerable minority, and fail to call them on it.

It is my view that the radical right wing is virtually always wrong, as demonstrated during just the last 2 centuries.

wrong about slavery
wrong about the civil war
wrong in their (winning position) on Native Americans
wrong in bringing us the Irish potato famine
wrong in resisting abolition of child labor
wrong about keeping women from voting
wrong about repression of workers' rights and labor unions and working conditions
wrong for bringing us the KKK
wrong for bringing us Jim Crow
wrong for bringing us segregation
wrong for bringing us Nazism in Europe
wrong for bringing us the McCarthy Era
wrong about prohibition
wrong about Christian and Islamic fundamentalism with its intolerance and terrorism
wrong about the civil rights movement
wrong in its anti-Semitism
wrong about women's rights and sexism
wrong about wanting to give wealth and power to the top 1%
wrong about homosexuals today,

The radical right-wingers are WRONG for always trying to impose their views on everyone through intimidation and hysteria and terror. Homosexuals live in fear every day. The older generation is still shell-shocked from the 1950s terror and in 1998 its members still fear even giving out their own names as homosexuals. The young generation fears being called "fag" at high school, and being smashed against high school lockers, or even worse.

Christmas Eve at MCC in New Haven

Come and spend Christmas Eve with your family at MCC New Haven. Join us for Candles and Carols at 7 PM and 11 PM. There will be a special time for children in the 7 PM service. MCC New Haven is located in the Westville section of New Haven, just off Whalley Ave. at 34 Harrison St. Call the church office for directions and more information at (203) 389-6750 or visit our website: www.mccnh.org. Rev. Frank Beard invites all of our community to come and celebrate the birth of Christ together.

AT LAST!

TCC's Monumental **BOOK SALE**

Sunday, December 6th
From 1 - 3 PM

Over 1,500

Books, Videos & Records

Nothing over \$3.00...Nothing!

Hundreds of subjects!

GET THEM WHILE THEY LAST!

CONNECTICUT NEWS

They're Here, They're Queer

Richard Agostinho remembers the first time he cut class. A freshman at Glastonbury High School, he was cornered by a classmate in the hallway. "He asked me if I was a faggot." Agostinho tried to deny it and the other boy punched him in the face. That was five years ago. "We've come a long way" since then, says Joan Beach, a health and physical education teacher in Glastonbury. Last year, a student asked Beach to help him start a Gay Straight Alliance. She encouraged him to go to the administration himself and explain the need. The administration responded with a mandatory faculty workshop and support for the GSA. The alliance, for which Beach is the faculty adviser, now meets twice a month and is attended by between 10 and 35 kids.

Unfortunately, this success story remains too rare a phenomenon in Connecticut, though the state is far ahead of most of the country in establishing legal protection for gay students. In June 1997, under pressure from gay rights advocates, the legislature amended its anti-discrimination statute to make Connecticut one of only a handful of states that prohibits discrimination in the public schools on the basis of sexual orientation.

But, in some areas Connecticut shows less leadership than other New England states. Massachusetts and Vermont state agencies, for example, recently conducted surveys to determine the health and educational risks for these students. Connecticut has undertaken no such survey and so has no statistics on the educational and health risks gay teens face. This spring, Vermont Gov. Howard Dean visited a public high school and spent 45 minutes decrying anti-gay harassment. In contrast, Connecticut Gov. John Rowland refused — for the third year in a row — to sign a proclamation marking June as Gay Pride Month.

Even those adults within the school system who are supposed to serve as resources for these children are often not willing to take a proactive stance and advocate for them. Asked if she believes gay students are being harassed at school, East Hartford High School social worker Marilyn Dupuis says: "I'm sure that they have been. There's no way we're going to stop that. We're never going to stop people from being narrow and cruel. That's the way it is." Many administrators seem eager to dismiss the harassment as "teasing," just one of the tough things about growing up. But sexual minority youth are more alone than their peers.

Dan Woog, a teacher at Staples High School in Westport, thinks that verbal slurs are in some ways worse than physical harassment, which administrators are quicker to identify and punish. Woog helped found Connecticut's first Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) in a public school. The alliances are intended as forums where students, teachers and parents can discuss homophobia and sexual identity, regardless of their own sexual orientation. There are now 16 GSAs in the Connecticut public schools. Woog feels that since the Staples GSA's inception, the atmosphere has changed significantly. "Many more kids are aware of the power of language. You hear 'faggot' and 'queer' much less. Kids are aware that they have gay and lesbian classmates, even if they don't know who they are."

While administrators and faculty recognize that schools should be safe places for all students to learn, regardless of their sexual orientation, many are not willing to take a public and proactive stance against harassment to make this possible. Their hesitance stems in large part from fear of community reaction — a fear that is not entirely unjustified.

Given the sometimes ferocious public reaction to any school policy that even hints at "condoning" homosexuality, it's not surprising that administrators often refuse to fight for their gay students. New Haven attorney **Maureen Murphy** has handled cases of sexual orientation harassment outside the courtroom. She says administrators' responses run the gamut. "In some cases, the school doesn't make an effort to intercede. In other cases, they just throw their hands up and say they've talked to the kids and that they just can't stop it. In other cases, just a letter from our office can make a difference." Murphy does say that schools often don't take claims seriously until a lawyer becomes involved. She also says that in many cases, rather than sue, parents will simply take their children out of the public schools. "The majority of these cases don't involve students that identify themselves as gay," notes Murphy. Pointing to the high suicide rate among sexual minority youth, she voices concern about those kids who are gay and have not yet identified themselves as such. "Who knows how much further these kids will go into the closet because of their experiences?"

Controversy can be painful and destructive. It can also produce positive change, notes Robin Passariello, founder of the Children from the Shadows conference, pointing to the Brookfield High School GSA as an example. "Even when there's a lot of hostility, something good can come out of it," she says. "That's why it's important to have laws and policies in place to protect those people when there is a community backlash. So you can say to those one or two parents [who object], 'We're doing what we have to do to protect our kids.'" Passariello grew up in Connecticut and started the Children from the Shadows conference as field work at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work. The conference, which celebrated its fifth year, consists of two days of workshops, speakers, activities and entertainment in March. This year, CFS attracted between 800 and 1,000 people.

Stamford School's Goal is Helping Youth

A panel discussion was held in November in Stamford to raise awareness of, and sensitivity to gay and lesbian youth issues. The session was sponsored by Stamford Public School's Office of Diversity and Multicultural Education. The discussion was designed to ensure a safe environment for gay and lesbian students. Speakers included David Knapp, co-chair of Stonewall Speakers Association, Lester Sharlach, former president of the local chapter of Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbian and Gays; and Deann LeBeau, a retired teacher from Newtown High School.

The session covered such topics as how teachers can handle incidents involving anti-gay verbal abuse and how to accommodate students who are gay. Sharlach, a Stamford resident, said the goal is to reach out to school social workers, teachers and others who might be able to help homosexual students. Teachers must be willing to stop anti-gay comments, he said and the suicide rate is about 30% higher than the rest of the population.



Happy Holidays!

FROM YOUR NEWS & VIEWS
EDITOR, MICHELE STONE.

Gays: Dodd/Franks Debate

The Connecticut Broadcasters Association (CBA) sponsored a debate on October 29th between US Senator Christopher Dodd and his Republican opponent, Gary Franks. During the debate, Franks chastised Dodd several times for Dodd's earlier description of Clinton as an "idiot" for allowing the Monica Lewinsky affair to happen. Franks said, "I don't raise my children to be name callers." Michael Collins, CBA board member and public relations director of Norwalk's Triangle Community Center asked Franks and Dodd what they thought of Republican US Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott's comparison of homosexuals to "kleptomaniacs."

Franks, a right-wing black Republican, did not answer specifically about Lott. He did note that he has "been a victim of bigotry" and an attack at his Waterbury, CT home by the Ku Klux Klan. Franks said that, "bigotry cannot be accepted anywhere in America, and I would strongly support federal legislation that would protect the rights of all individuals who are gay."

It might be noted that the planks in the platform of the Republican Party for the 1996 presidential campaign included the phrase that the Republican party supports equal rights for racial minorities but opposes any "pernicious" attempts to extend this concept to homosexuals. Franks said that, "individuals (who commit crimes of bigotry) should be punished swiftly and severely and federal legislation should apply." However, afterward, in conversation with Michael Collins, Franks said, "If you had asked me about gay marriage I would have given a different answer."

Senator Dodd said "I commend my opponent." Dodd also noted he voted for the federal law to protect gays in employment several years ago. "I think it is unfortunate that the majority leader used the language he did because unfortunately language does affect people, because it isn't just laws, it's how leaders talk on issues," that affects events. Dodd used words no stronger than "ill-advised" to describe Lott's use of the word kleptomaniacs. "To compare homosexuality to kleptomania was ill-advised," Dodd said before an audience of Connecticut TV and radio station owners, managers, programmers and engineers. The debate was broadcast on Connecticut Public Television as well. Dodd went on to win the November 3rd election by a very large margin over Franks, garnering 65 per cent of the vote.

-Michael Collins

Vigil for Matthew in Fairfield

A vigil for Matthew Shepard, the young gay man killed in a vicious attack in Laramie, Wyoming in October and James Byrd, the black man killed in a vicious attack in Jasper, Texas in which he was dragged by a pickup truck on a chain, were remembered in a vigil on Sunday (November 1st). The vigil was at the First Church Congregational in Fairfield. Some 150 people turned out on the Fairfield Green, and the church bells were rung to honor the victims. The church described the vigil as civil observance to demonstrate, "our resolve against bigotry, to stand for equal protection before the law, and to commit our nation to justice." The Triangle Community Center (TCC) arranged media coverage for the vigil, and it was the lead story on WTNH channel 8 New Haven on the 8 PM evening news and also was a top story on Cablevision 12 news Sunday evening. The Connecticut Post also ran a story.

The Reverend David Spoliett, pastor of the First Church Congregational, said "I do think the Christian Church needs to come to grips with the centuries-old problem of racism and with homophobia." Some parents brought their children to the vigil, telling channel 8 news that they wanted to teach their children about intolerance and bigotry. The Reverend Spoliett also noted in his address to the crowd that Jesus said the greatest commandment is

to love God and love your neighbor as much as yourself. Other pastors who spoke included, the Rev. Henry Morris, pastor of Our Saviours Lutheran Church of Fairfield, Mr. Erick Olson, associate pastor of the First Church Congregational of Fairfield, and the Rev. Alida Ward Sohuchert, associate pastor of the Greenfield Hill Congregational Church of Fairfield. Several people from TCC attended the Fairfield vigil including board member, John DeVecchio, and public relations director, Michael Collins.

The family of Matthew Shepard is asking that donations be sent to help support the groups Matthew cared about. They asked that donations be sent to the Matthew Shepard Donation Fund, First National Bank, P.O. Box 578, Fort Collins, Colorado 80522. Account # 1926083.

-Michael Collins

Homophobia Runs Deep, Gay Activist Tells Hamden Students

Troix Bettencourt was 16 and living a lie in 1992: a young gay man masquerading as straight. Today, at 24, he's emerged as one of the nation's most outspoken "Gen-X" gay advocates. Bettencourt brought his story and message to Quinnipiac College in November, telling gay and lesbian students that despite society's more tolerant attitude toward homosexuals, there's still much work to be done. Bettencourt has had his struggles with homophobia. His mother called the police to remove him from the house in 1992, after he announced he was gay. Bettencourt told students the incident inspired him to become even more active in homosexual rights organizations. He was elected president of the Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth and was later named to the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Youth Commission.



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NEWS & VIEWS

Message From Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Chaplain, to Trinity College in Hartford

I saw on the news that Matthew Shepard died. He was the 22 year old man from Wyoming who was beaten and tortured and left to die for no reason other than he was a homosexual. This tragic murder has raised a national debate again, the kind of periodic soul-searching our society goes through whenever a crime of hate startles us into awareness. The burning of Black churches, the bombing of innocent people, the death of a shy young man from Wyoming; these events suddenly shake us out of complacency and remind us that fear, prejudice and rage are always the shadows just beyond the light of our reason. And so people suddenly start to speak out. There are voices of outrage and grief. Voices of sorrow and demands to know why such a thing could happen. And predictably, there are also defensive voices like the governor of Wyoming trying to explain why his state has no laws to protect people from hate crimes and the leadership of what is called the Christian "right wing" trying to explain why their national ads against homosexuality don't influence people to commit such violence against gays and lesbians.

As the chaplain for our own community, I would like to invite us all to consider Matthew's death in another way. Not through the clamor or denials, not through the shouts or cries of anger: but rather, through the silence of his death, the silence of that young man hanging on his cross of pain alone in the emptiness of a Wyoming night, the silence that ultimately killed him as surely as the beatings he endured. Silence killed Matthew Shepard. The silence of Christians who know that our scriptures on homosexuality are few and murky in interpretation and far outweighed by the words of a savior whose only comment on human relationships was to call us to never judge but only to love. The silence of well meaning educated people who pretend to have an enlightened view of homosexuality while quietly tolerating the abuse of gays and lesbians in their own communities. The silence of our elected officials who have the authority to make changes but prefer to count votes. The silence of the majority of "straight" Americans who shift uncomfortably when confronted by the thought that gays and lesbians may be no different from themselves, save for the fact that they are walking targets for bigotry, disrespect, cheap humor, and apparently, of murder.

Crimes of hate may live in shouts of rage, but they are born in silence. Here at Trinity, I hope we will all listen to that silence. Before we jump to decry Matthew's senseless death or before we seek to rationalize it with loud disclaimers: I hope we will just hear the silence. A young man's heart has ceased to beat. Hear the silence of that awful truth. It is the silence of death. It is the silence that descends on us like a shroud...

As a person of faith, I will listen, as we all will, to the many voices which will eulogize Matthew Shepard. I will carry that part of our national shame on my shoulders. But I will also listen to the silence which speaks much more eloquently still to the truth behind his death. I will listen and I will remember. And I will renew my resolve never to allow this silence to have the last word. Not for Matthew. Not for gay men or lesbian women. Not for any person in our society of any color or condition who has been singled out for persecution. Not in my church. Not in my nation. Not in Wyoming. And not at Trinity College.

State Supports New Britain Teacher

A former teacher who claims she was forced to resign because she is a lesbian has received the support of the Connecticut's human rights commission. Beth Kavy claims she had her nose broken by Maria Garcia, a former nurse at the DiLoreto School in New Britain in October of 1997, after an argument over another teacher, Lynn Kowalczyk. Both Kavy and Kowalczyk were transferred following the incident. Kavy claims she was eventually forced to resign by the school board. The human rights commission, which recently dismissed a similar complaint by Kowalczyk, has ruled in favor of Kavy. Based on that decision, Kavy said she plans to go forward with lawsuits against Garcia and members of the school board.

Raising The Demand For Awareness at UConn

The Rainbow Center at the University of Connecticut opened in October with an air of celebration. Then came news reports of the killing of Matthew Shepard. Feelings of shock and horror replaced celebration at the Rainbow Center, which needed no stronger reminder of why the center was formed. It sponsored a vigil for Shepard. The Rainbow Center is a university-backed organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students. It supports lesbian and gay students, and helps educate all students about issues regarding homosexuality.

UConn's Rainbow Center has been in existence for several years but opened this year for the first time with a full-time director and two staff members. While most campuses in this state have gay and lesbian student organizations, UConn's LGBT center is the first to reach this level of support.



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Gay Student's Death Spurs Debate

To the local gay and lesbian community, the beating death of a gay University of Wyoming student serves as a wake-up call to lawmakers and educators and rekindles some existing concerns. How many more will have to be taunted by names, beaten or killed until they feel safe in their community, they ask. Can this vicious crime happen here? Across Fairfield County, gays and lesbians and their supporters mourned and condemned the murder of 21-year-old Matthew Shepard. Statewide advocacy groups such as The Gay, lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) not only used the incident to push for a federal Hate Crimes Protection Act, but also called on "educators, community leaders, and concerned citizens to dramatically step up efforts to address anti-gay bias in Connecticut schools." The focus on young people in schools has been of particular interest to local activists who say early awareness and appreciation of people who perceive themselves as different can curb anti-bias behavior at a young age.

Dan Woog, a volunteer soccer coach at Staples High School in Westport, called Shepard's death "a wake-up call to straight people." Woog helped found Connecticut's first Gay Straight Alliance in a public school. When acts of violence toward gays and lesbians are reported in the news, it affects the community on many levels. "Older gay and lesbian people can relate back to a time of being found out," Woog said. "Younger kids might wonder suddenly about the world they are living in. A lot of kids, not here necessarily, relate to physical abuse. But there also is a noticeable amount of lack of address of the needs of gay and lesbian youth. A kid might hear 'faggot' or 'queer' but he or she won't hear a teacher react to it. They don't hear about their role models, history or issues. That isolation is very significant." Parents of gays and lesbians become isolated, too, Woog said. "A parent hears this and freaks out and fears for the kid, tries to push the kid back into the closet," he said.

"Every parent is concerned for their children regardless if they are gay or straight," said **Lester Sharlach**, a member of the local chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. In general, Sharlach said, hundreds of messages by parents and members of the group have expressed outrage as well as sorrow for Shepard's family. While that fear always exists for their children, lawmakers and activists seem more confident about Connecticut's laws, Sharlach said.

"Connecticut is at the forefront" of protecting gays and lesbians, said U.S. Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Stamford. Shays, who attended a reception held by the Lambda Legal Defense Fund in Stamford, is praised for being instrumental in sponsoring a national anti-discrimination act, which is set to be voted on. Lambda is the first and oldest legal defense fund for gays and lesbians.

Connecticut is one of 21 states that have hate-crime laws that include sexual orientation, said **Joe Grabarz**, executive director for the Connecticut American Civil Liberties Union. Grabarz, a former Bridgeport legislator who was one of the first state elected officials to announce he was gay, said two laws in particular make Connecticut unique. One is the Statistics Act, which requires that all crimes motivated by bigotry and bias are to be reported by local police to the state. The second is the Hate Crime Sentencing Act. If a crime committed against a person who characterizes himself or herself with a specific group the sentence is doubled. "Connecticut is an easier place to live" for gays and lesbians, Grabarz said. "But these incidents do happen, and they happen in Connecticut. The disturbing thing is that nationwide, we've seen an increase of crime against gays, while crimes against other groups have declined."

The laws may reflect a trend in statewide acceptance toward the gay and lesbian community but that does not represent the attitudes of citizens, said **Justine Michaud**, founder and former president of the Triangle Community Center in Norwalk, which has served gays and lesbians since 1991. "How do we make our community safe for people who perceive themselves differently?" Michaud asked. Michaud said she helped the existing state civil rights bill extend to sexual orientation, as well as extend anti-discrimination measures to include gays and lesbians in 1991. "When we look at the influence of politics nationally, there seems to be misinterpretation of Christianity, and that's not OK with me. It's not OK with me that people judge my life who don't know me," she said.

And those attitudes then trickle down into the schools, said **Dan Kelly** facilitator for OutSpoken, a weekly rap group for 16- to 22-year-olds that meets in the Triangle Community Center. "I do some speaking in some of the schools (about being gay) and something that strikes me is the level of ignorance," Kelly said. "It starts early in elementary school. The longer that's allowed to continue, the longer it takes to re-educate."

MICHAEL D. ROME

Attorney-at-Law

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NATIONAL NEWS

National Gay and Lesbian Election Report

Gay and Lesbian Congressional Candidates (Non-Incumbent)



Tammy Baldwin (D) vs. Josephine Musser (R)
Wisconsin 2nd Congressional District
Baldwin wins (53% to 47%) Baldwin is the first openly lesbian to win a seat in the US Congress.

Paul Barby (D) vs. Rep. Frank Lucas (R)
Oklahoma 6th Congressional District
Barby defeated (34% - 65%)

Christine Kehoe (D) vs. Rep. Brian Bilbray (R)
California 49th Congressional District
Kehoe defeated. Kehoe is an open lesbian.

Grethe Cammermeyer (D) vs. Rep. Jack Metcalf (R)

Washington 2nd Congressional District

Cammermeyer defeated (45% - 55%)

Cammermeyer is a retired army colonel who successfully challenged her dismissal from the military after having truthfully answered questions pertaining to her sexual orientation.

Gay Congressional Candidates (Incumbent)

Rep. Barney Frank (D) vs. unopposed

Massachusetts 4th Congressional District

Frank is an openly gay, progressive incumbent. He is a consistent voice and vote on issues of concern to the GLBT community.

Rep. Jim Kolbe (R) vs. Thomas John Vclgy (D)

Arizona 5th Congressional District

Kolbe wins (52% to 46%) Kolbe is openly gay and an Employment Non-Discrimination Act co-sponsor. He also brought the Hefley Amendment, which would have overturned the Executive Order protecting federal employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Marriage Ballot Initiatives

Hawaii: Initiative passed 69% - 28%

The Hawaii ballot initiative likely will lead to a ban on same-sex marriage. The vote amended the state's constitution to empower the legislature to reserve marriage to opposite sex couples. (A second initiative to call for a constitutional convention - where an anti-gay marriage amendment could have been added to the constitution failed 59% - 34%). In a 1996 ruling, a Hawaii court ruled that there is no valid reason for denying same-sex couples the freedom to marry. The government appealed that decision to the Hawaii Supreme Court, and a final decision is expected any time. This vote will essentially nullify the expected positive court decision.

Alaska: Initiative passed 68% - 32%

In Alaska, voters elected to amend the state Constitution to limit the definition of marriage as only between one man and one woman. The initiative was in reaction to a ruling by the state's Superior Court (Brause v. Alaska) this past February in Alaska determining that the denial of same-sex marriage violates privacy and equal protection under the state's constitution.

Ballot Initiatives (non-marriage)

South Portland, Maine - Anti-discrimination ordinance

Passed (54% to 46%)

Ogunquit, Maine - Anti-discrimination ordinance

Failed by 9 votes (50.6% - 49.4% or 383 - 374).

Fayetteville, Arkansas - Anti-discrimination ordinance

Failed (60% to 40%)

Fort Collins, Colorado - Anti-discrimination ordinance

Failed (62% to 38% - not all precincts reporting)

South Portland, Maine - passed

This ordinance prohibits acts of discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, or the extension of credit. In February, Mainers voted to repeal a state law banning anti-gay discrimination. In South Portland, 60 percent of the voters favored keeping the state law. This year the South Portland City Council decided to put the issue directly to the voters rather than having the council vote on the ordinance.

Ogunquit, Maine - failed

Referendum question 4 amends the Ogunquit Municipal Code to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, and the extension of credit. In response to the repeal of Maine's statewide civil rights law banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, activists with Concerned Citizens of Ogunquit gathered enough signatures to have a human rights ordinance modeled after the statewide non-discrimination bill placed on the November 3rd ballot.

Fayetteville, Arkansas - failed

Resolution 51-98, the Fayetteville Human Dignity Resolution, would have added the categories of sexual orientation and familial status to the City of Fayetteville's non-discrimination policy for public employees. Last spring, the city council passed this non-discrimination resolution. The mayor vetoed it, and in a rare move the council overrode the mayor's veto, effectively enacting the resolution as law. A local group affiliated with the Christian Coalition gathered enough petition signatures to put the measure up for a vote.

Fort Collins, Colorado - failed

Ordinance 22 would have added sexual orientation to the city's non-discrimination law covering employment, housing, and public accommodations. The city council and mayor enacted the ordinance into law last spring. Shortly thereafter right-wing opposition groups gathered enough signatures to have the measure referred to the ballot.

Senate Races

Senator Al D'Amato (R) vs. Charles Schumer (D)

Schumer wins (55% to 45%)

Chuck Schumer will become the new junior senator from New York. He defeated Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) in one of the most contentious campaigns in the country. While D'Amato recently made overtures to the GLBT community, his staunch anti-choice votes angered many in the GLBT, feminist, and other progressive communities.

Senator Barbara Boxer (D) vs. Matt Fong (R)

Boxer wins (53% - 43%)

Boxer is a staunch advocate of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender civil rights and reproductive choice. Fong stated that he believes marriage should be between a man and a woman. He has also stated that he does not support "homosexual behavior." Fong believes "Roe v. Wade was wrongly decided," and he opposes public funding and late-term abortions, and supports a parental consent requirement.

Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D) vs. Robert Dornan (R)

California 46th Congressional District

Sanchez wins (56% to 39%)

For the second time in a row, Representative Sanchez defeated former Congressman Dornan. Dornan spearheaded many anti-gay bills and amendments while in Congress.

Conference Studies Gay Prevention

Hundreds gathered at a church near Columbus, OH recently, to talk about understanding and preventing childhood homosexuality, in what a conservative group hopes to be the first of a series of conferences around the country. The meeting was sponsored by Focus on the Family, a Colorado Springs, Colo.-based ministry that publishes more than a dozen magazines.

The ministry believes homosexuality is the result of environment and relationships between children, their parents and peers. Some groups, they say, try to "normalize" homosexuality by teaching children about historic figures who are gay. The conference encouraged parents to complain if they are unhappy with the curriculum of the schools their children attend. The ministry also contended that gay rights groups plant the idea of homosexuality in children's minds if the youngsters have any type of attraction to the same gender. Attractions, they say, are a normal part of growing up, and most of those children become heterosexual adults if left alone.

Targets of Hate

Gays and lesbians are six times more likely to be physically attacked on the basis of who they are than Jews or Hispanics, and twice as likely to be attacked as African-Americans, said Mark Potok, spokesman for the Southern Poverty Law Center in Birmingham, Ala., which tracks hate crimes. A 1989 academic study found that 45 percent of lesbians had been attacked and 29 percent of gay men, based on their sexual orientation, he said. Worse, Potok added, is that hate crimes against gays tend to be the most vicious.

Don't look to police records to find out what's really going on, experts say; the stories often aren't reported. Albany police, for example, have no record of violence against gays through all of 1998, although the city's human rights law mandates that they track it. Hate crime statistics, collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation since 1990, are woefully incomplete, Potok said. Nine states have no hate-crimes statutes, and many police departments lack a hate-crimes category on report forms. Training in hate-crimes prosecution has been scant, Potok said.

Gay Votes Help Defeat D'Amato

U.S. Senate candidate Chuck Schumer won the election with 54 percent of the vote compared to 44 percent for Al D'Amato and will join fellow Democrat Daniel Patrick Moynihan in the Senate. In his acceptance speech, Schumer mentioned Gays once. Many Gay New Yorkers, had not originally supported Schumer in his bid to unseat D'Amato. Schumer received the fewest endorsements from Gay Democratic groups of the three challengers. But the fact that Gay New Yorkers lined up behind Schumer in the general election indicates a "maturity" to the Gay community, said Sterling Zinsmeyer, president of Stonewall Democrats. Zinsmeyer said, "This is a significant change. It's a maturing of the community beyond our own narrow interests. We looked at the two candidates that have similar records on Gay issues, but also saw that D'Amato is completely wrong on every other issue."

"Religious Right" Trounced

Some of the brightest stars of the religious right were trounced in the 1998 elections. Governor John Rowland (R-CT) told the New York Times on October 31 that "our party doesn't get it at the national level. Beating up on gays — all that stuff. That turns my stomach. We're never going to win the White House again unless we have an ability to reach out to people.

The Congressional GOP leadership wasted the summer trying to explain why homosexuality is a disease akin to kleptomania, meeting with religious right leaders like James Dobson of Focus on the Family to assuage his threats to leave the party unless his agenda was met, blocking the nomination of openly-gay ambassador nominee James Hormel, and promoting the anti-gay Hefley Amendment, which would have repealed all non-discrimination policies which covered gay federal workers. Dobson and Bauer spent millions of dollars in a disastrous campaign to knock off moderate Republicans in primary elections around the country. Instead of tax cuts, more welfare reform or balancing the budget, the issue of homosexuality was on the front covers of the nation's news magazines.

"This purge of social conservatives by the voters is a crucial warning to the Republican leadership about the stakes in 2000," said one Republican leader. "Unless the winning side of this party takes full control of the leadership and the agenda and we move in the direction of the GOP governors — inclusion, problem-solving and distancing from the religious right — we will have another night like last night (election night), which means losing the White House and maybe losing the Congress."

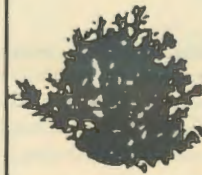
TRIVIA QUESTION

Answer to Nov. - "Just As I Am", by Dan Williams and Earl Handy. Question for December - Drag was the name of a transvestite show starring Mae West in her pre-movie days, a show which was attacked and eventually cancelled on account of its content, considerable lewd in the 20's. Where did this show have its premiere?

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Pope Hits Out at Non-Marital Unions

Pope John Paul has lashed out at non-marital unions, saying the traditional family was the only permissible social solution and implicitly condemning legal recognition of homosexual couples. "While respecting other types of on the same level as them is a grave damage to the and the family," the regrettable in the long longer on natural law arbitrary will, were to different kinds of great confusion," he told delegates to an international meeting of European politicians and lawmakers. The 78-year-old Polish Pontiff is a fierce advocate of the traditional family structure, considering it a basic building block of society under threat from cultural and social decay. In 1994 he attacked the European Parliament over a resolution that urged governments to enact legislation allowing homosexuals to marry and adopt children.

Gay 'Marriages' Make Church Review Its Code

As in many mainline Protestant churches, the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. is struggling to come to terms with homosexual parishioners, and especially with the homosexual unions. The highest governing Church U.S.A., which has considered to ban ministers from blessing of any same-Mark Tammen.. Order, the Presbyterian would not be proper sacrament to perform a same-sex union that the minister determines to be the same as a marriage."

personal freedom, putting interpersonal relationships marriage by legalizing decision that can only institution of matrimony Pope said. "It would be term if laws, based no but on individuals' give the same legal status to communal life, causing told delegates to an

STATE BY STATE NEWS

IL - Gay Church Sues TV Station

The nation's largest gay and lesbian church has filed suit against a Chicago television station, accusing the station of breaking its agreement to broadcast an infomercial produced by the church because the station considered the advertisement too controversial. Leaders of the church in Dallas, believe the station, WGN-TV, rejected the infomercial "based on their views that this is not appropriate content for those stations," said a lawyer for the church, Christopher Wolf. "I think those are code words for homophobia and for anti-gay discrimination." The church spent two years producing the infomercial in part as a counterweight to advertising by conservative Christian groups, including recent full-page newspaper advertisements with people who say they are former homosexuals who "overcame" their sexual orientation.

Most of the cable companies the church contacted said no. WGN-TV agreed to broadcast the advertisement, scheduled five showings and accepted a check for the first payment in July, church officials say. Then, church officials said, a week later, WGN canceled the agreement and returned the check. The attorney for WGN said that infomercials that touch on sensitive subjects are routinely turned down by television stations.

IL - Foundation Fined In Firing of Lesbian

A foundation that fired a woman for being a lesbian has been ordered by the city's Commission on Human Relations to pay her \$13,000 in damages. The Inner City Horticultural Foundation hired Fawn Houck for a gardening program with Cabrini-Green children. But upon learning she was gay, the executive director fired her because "he was afraid to have her go on out-of-town trips with the children and said that he was worried about her influence on them," the commission said. The foundation was ordered to pay Houck's attorney's fees. Its staff also must attend sensitivity training.

NH - Church Welcomes Gays

Prodded by a hate crime in Wyoming, the First Congregational Church of Pelham formally has invited homosexuals to join its flock. For the past year, it has blessed same-sex unions, but now by a 70-22 vote, the congregation has invited homosexuals and bisexuals into its fold. The welcome had been in the works four years. But it was pushed by the beating death last month of Matthew Shepard, a gay college student in Wyoming. The church is one of six UCC congregations among 140 in New Hampshire to invite homosexuals. The Pelham church is about 250 years old. Of its 400 members, about 175 attend regularly. It is the same church that in 1990 overwhelmingly rejected the same proposal.

NJ - Judge Gives Lesbians Joint Custody

A lesbian must share custody of her 2-year-old son with her ex-partner, a judge has ruled. Experts say the decision, which grants the ex-partner the status of a parent, is a first because of the broad custodial rights given to a woman who is not the child's birth mother. The partner, identified only as R.E.M., was not the boy's biological mother but stayed home to take care of him while her partner, S.L.V., went to work. The Lakewood couple chose a sperm donor together to inseminate S.L.V., sent out birth announcements with both women's fingerprints on them and attended Lamaze classes together. "The court is satisfied that R.E.M. has been able to show that she stands in the shoes of a parent to the child and should be accorded the status of parent in parity with S.L.V.," Superior Court Judge Vincent Grasso wrote in his decision. Dozens of lesbian couples who adopted or raised a child together have become involved in custody battles over the past decade.

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KY - Judge Denies Request to Rejoin NKU Team

Jaime Garner's efforts to return to Northern Kentucky University's women's basketball team immediately were denied Friday. U.S. District Judge Jennifer B. Coffman of London denied a motion to reinstate Ms. Garner, a 5-foot-7-inch guard and the team's No. 2 scorer last season, to the team. Returning Ms. Garner to the team would irreparably harm the team and the university, the judge ruled after a Friday telephone conference with attorneys from both parties. Her decision came about a week before the women's basketball team begins its new season. In a federal discrimination lawsuit, Ms. Garner said she was dismissed from the team in May because of her sexual orientation.

Ms. Garner, 22, of Richmond, Ky., is a senior. In the federal lawsuit she filed in October, she said Coach Winstel asked her about her sexual orientation in a meeting earlier this year. "I didn't answer her because it was none of her business," she said in the lawsuit. The suit also said Coach Winstel asked Miss Garner about a relationship she was having with another player on the team. Meanwhile, NKU officials have said Ms. Garner was dismissed from the team for reasons that had nothing to do with her sexual orientation. She has retained her scholarship. The defense team said Ms. Garner wasn't a team player.

NY - Police Said To Deny HIV Medicine

Gay activists jailed for their part in a huge demonstration complained that they were denied access to their AIDS medication, which can lose effectiveness if patients miss even a single dose. At least five of the roughly 100 people arrested were denied access to HIV or AIDS medication, according to the New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project. The arrests occurred during a rally in response to the slaying of Matthew Shepard, the gay University of Wyoming student who was beaten and lashed to a fence.

TX - Case May Test Sodomy Law

Two men arrested while having sex in an apartment in Houston may use their case to try to overturn the Texas anti-sodomy law, their lawyer said. "We think they've got a right to privacy that was invaded by the cops," attorney David Jones said. The men were charged Sept. 17 with homosexual conduct, a Class C misdemeanor, the lowest ranking violation, carrying a \$500 fine on conviction. They are free on \$200 bond each. The arrests occurred after Harris County sheriff's deputies saw them while responding to a false report of a man with a gun. The false report apparently came from a man who had been with the men earlier the same evening. Gay advocates have been campaigning on a state-by-state basis to change anti-sodomy laws. Nineteen states have laws banning oral and anal sex. Fourteen ban those sex acts between all couples. Five, including Texas, limit the ban to same-sex couples.

WA - Kent Schools Pay \$40,000 in Gay Case

A Kentwood High School graduate who sued the Kent School District, alleging that it failed to protect him from anti-gay harassment, has agreed to a \$40,000 settlement. The school district also agreed to continue to review its student-to-student harassment policies and training, and update them when necessary. School officials never denied that the incidents had occurred. But they said they had acted in good faith to enforce anti-harassment policies and to discipline students involved in the beating.

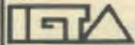
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TRANSGENDER NEWS

The New Minority

Aided by the political gains of gays and lesbians — the transgender community of transsexuals, cross dressers and others appears to be gaining acceptance as a bona fide minority group. A small but growing number of cities grant them special protections; some employers take pains to treat them sensitively; and the media has given them increasing visibility. Still, many transgender people — defined by the National Journal of Sexual Orientation Law as those “whose gender identity or expression differs from conventional expectations of masculinity or femininity” — remain frustrated. They are routinely denied access to bathrooms and other public accommodations, according to a case before the California Supreme Court. Many complain that they are targets of hate crimes. And they continue to face resistance from the religious right.

Transgender rights also are problematic for some gays and lesbians. A spat recently broke out over the pending federal Employment Nondiscrimination Act, which as written would shield gays and lesbians from job bias. Some activists want it to also cover

transgender people, who can be either gay or heterosexual. But to their dismay, the Human Rights Campaign — a nationwide gay and lesbian lobbying group — has opposed the idea. “We absolutely agree that the transgender community should have employment protections,” said Nancy Buermeier, the campaign’s senior policy advocate. But getting support for gay and lesbian issues is hard enough, she added, without adding the still-volatile issue of transgender rights. “

That cross dressers and transsexuals are objecting to such issues in public is itself significant. No longer willing to suffer in silence, transgender activists these days loudly protest any perceived slight. They recently chastised Ford Motor Company for its still-running ad with a male character who is forced to wear women’s clothes after losing a bet about a Ford truck. Among other signs of a developing trend, the Random House Webster’s College Dictionary included the term “transgender” for the first time last year. Hollywood is producing more transgender-themed films and such businesses as AT&T, Hewlett-Packard Co. and Sun Microsystems Inc. win praise for their relative sensitivity toward transgender employees.

Maria C. Castillo, MSW, LCSW

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Sources

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Peter Scifo

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- A.A. - Don 762-9964
 Bi Rap Group - Peter 838-2806; Robin 855-8646
 35+ Women's Pot Lucks - Judy 227-7162
 Free Association of Fairfield County - Bruce 782-1496
 Gay Men's Rap Group - Dave 838-1881
 Gmosaic (People of Color) - Nasheed 854-7726
 Lesbian Literature Reading Group - Christine 847-8476
 Out & About (20's & 30's) - Heather 924-2930, Ashley 576-1073
 or Dan 838-2367
 OutSpoken (Youth) - Perry & Sara 846-4569; Dan 227-1755;
 Doug 838-2367
 P-FLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians & Gays) -
 Joan 544-8724; Lester 322-5380; Belinda 855-1203
 P-FLAG Spouses & Ex Spouses Group - Joan 544-8724
 Triangle Bowling League (Circle Lanes, Fairfield) - Lisa 333-3113;
 Roseann 931-8789
 Women's Rap Group - Chandra 226-8652; Linda 866-4598;
 Michele 438-4465
 Writer's Group - Mona 863-1553
 All meetings are held at the Center and in the evening unless
 otherwise noted. A \$3 donation per person is appreciated with your
 participation in activities to help support the Center.

OTHER AREA GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Bare & Gay (B&G) gay nudists | (203) 330-9595 |
| Bisexually Curious Support Group Bpt | (203) 264-5605 |
| Chiltern Mountain Club | (203) 899-0270 |
| Connecticut Kids and Families | (203) 256-8414 |
| Connecticut Freedom to Marry Coalition | (203) 791-9553 |
| 40-Up Club. (Social Grp. -call Dale before 10pm) | (203) 261-4019 |
| Gay Fathers Group | (203) 866-7051 |
| Gay Mens Association of Danbury | (203) 778-7016 |
| GEMS (Mature GLBT) | (860) 688-1881 |
| GuideLine (gay/lesbian phone info) | (203) 366-3734 |
| Hartford Community Center | (203) 724-5542 |
| Married Men's Bisexual Suppt Grp Htfd | (203) 262,1555 |
| Metropolitan Community Church | (203) 389-6750 |
| Rainbow Task Force (Unitarian Church) | (203) 222-1441 |
| Transgendered Resource - Kaylen | (203) 661-2448 |
| The Loft, White Plains NY, | (914) 948-4922 |
| Triangle Bowling League | (203) 931-8789 |
| Triangle Kids | (203) 323-6278 & (203) 255-6229 |
| Western Connecticut Gay Men's Group | (203) 773-9947 |

Call (203) 964-1133 for free listing.

WHERE ARE WE? The Triangle Community Center Inc. is located at 25 Van Zant Street in Norwalk. From I-95, take Exit 16 and go south (from Stamford, turn right; from New Haven, turn left). Continue south under the railroad bridge and turn right on Van Zant St. (Route 136). 25 Van Zant is a large condominium office building on the right. TCC is in Suite 7-C on the ground floor. Tel. (203) 853-0600.

Deadline for the January Newsletter is Saturday, December 12th. We cannot guarantee that material received after this date will be included in the Jan. News & Views.

TRIANGLE COMMUNITY CENTER, INC.

P.O. BOX 4062, East Norwalk, CT 06855

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STANDING COMMITTEES

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| AIDS Liaison | Tom M | 374-6934 |
| Board Development | Vacant | |
| Communications | John D | 334-3822 |
| -Public Relations | Mike C | 375-3567 |
| Finance | John W | 261-7349 |
| Fundraising | Vacant | |
| Membership | Denyse B | 367-3911 |
| -Member Database | Marianne S | 222-8294 |
| Operations | Cindy M | 595-9799 |
| (and to schedule events at the Center) | | |
| Program | Dave C | 838-1881 |
| Resource Room | Walter D | 374-6934 |
| -Center Forums | Marianne S | 222-8294 |
| Volunteer | Karen J | 899-0381 |

NEWS & VIEWS

Is published monthly by
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 P.O. Box 4062, East Norwalk, CT 06855.

NEWS & VIEWS encourages its readers to submit materials of interest to our community, including short articles, letters to the editor, etc. We cannot respond to, or publish, anonymous letters. We reserve the right to edit or condense as appropriate to meet space requirements. Authors will be contacted if major revisions are necessary. Please submit to:

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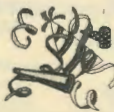
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TCC Calendar

December, 1998

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Lesbian Lit 7:30	2 P-FLAG 7:45	3 Men's Rap 7:30	4 G-Mosaic 7:30 Bowl 9:30 Circle Lanes	5
6 AA 9-10 am OutSpoken 4-6	7 Women's Rap 7:30	8 TCC Board 7:30 Witter's Group 7:30	9 Bi Rap Group 7:30 Spirituality Group 7	10 Men's Rap 7:30	11 Out & About 7:00 Bowl 9:30 Circle Lanes	12 N&V's Deadline
13 AA 9-10 am OutSpoken 4-6 Movie Night 6 Hanukkah begins at sundown	14 Women's Rap 7:30	15	16 P-FLAG Spouses & Ex-spouses 7:30	17 Men's Rap 7:30	18 G-Mosaic 7:30 Bowl 9:30 Circle Lanes	19
20 AA 9-10 am OutSpoken 4-6 Friendraiser 2-6	21 Women's Rap 7:30	22 TCC Board 7:30 Writer's Group 7:30	23 Bi Rap Group 7:30 Spirituality Group 7	24 Men's Rap 7:30	25 	26
27 AA 9-10 am OutSpoken 4-6	28 Women's Rap 7:30	29	30	31 		

Connecticut Calendar - December

Thursday, December 3 – The Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective will be holding a volunteer orientation for anyone interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities from 6-7 PM at the Health Collective, 1841 Broad St., Hartford, or call Joe Simard at 860-278-4163.

Friday, December 4 – Movie: "Miracle on 34th Street" at the NHGLCC, 50 Fitch Street, New Haven. 6:30 PM potluck, 7:15 PM screening, \$3.00. More info: FGDMYO@aol.com.

Friday, December 11 – Movie: "Holiday Inn" at the NHGLCC, 50 Fitch Street, New Haven. 6:30 PM potluck, 7:15 PM screening, \$3.00. More info: FGDMYO@aol.com.

Tuesday, December 15 – The Third Tuesday in New Milford's Christmas Party will be held at the Bistro Cafe on Bank Street in downtown New Milford at 7 PM. Go upstairs to the Tap Room past the "private party" sign. Featuring live Christmas music, and lots of nice people.

Friday, December 18 – Movie: "Scrooge" (Musical) at the NHGLCC, 50 Fitch Street, New Haven. 6:30 PM potluck, 7:15 PM screening, \$3.00.

Thursday, December 24 – Midnight Mass at Dignity Hartford. We will gather at the Quaker Meeting house at 10:00 PM for a dessert social. At 11:30 we will have a carol sing, followed by Christmas Mass at midnight. All are welcome to join us.

Friday, December 25 – Movie: "White Christmas" at the NHGLCC, 50 Fitch Street, New Haven. 6:30 PM potluck, 7:15 PM screening, \$3.00. More info: FGDMYO@aol.com.

Thursday, December 31 – Women After Hours New Years Eve Ball (women only), Holiday Inn, East Hartford, 8:30 PM - 1:00 AM, \$10.00 cover. For info call 860-528-9611.

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