



**Amarillo
Lesbian
Gay
Alliance**

Update

Volume 2, Number 10

ALGA Information Line: 373-5725

January 1996

Events Calendar

Queer Dinner Club
Thursday, January 4
Washington Square
7:30 p.m.
Everyone Invited

"Question Of Equality"
Part 1
Thursday, Jan 4
Classifieds, 9 - 10 p.m.

P-FLAG
(Parents Family & Friends Of
Lesbians and Gays)
Tuesday, January 9
7:30 p.m.
Call 358-4810 or 373-5885
for details

"Question Of Equality"
Part 2
Thursday, Jan 11
Classifieds, 9 - 10 p.m.

Queer Dinner Club
Thursday, January 18
Italian Delights
7:30 p.m.
Everyone Invited

"Question Of Equality"
Part 3
Thursday, Jan 18
Classifieds, 9 - 10 p.m.

"Question Of Equality"
Part 4
Thursday, Jan 25
Classifieds, 9 - 10 p.m.

HAWAII STATE COMMISSION URGES LEGISLATURE TO LEGALIZE MARRIAGE FOR SAME-GENDER COUPLES

HONOLULU, Dec. 8, 1995 -- In an historic first, a Hawaii state government-created commission, specifically charged with studying the freedom to marry that is denied same-gender couples, forwarded a report to the state legislature today recommending Hawaii marriage laws be amended "to allow two people regardless of their gender to marry."

The report by the Hawaii Commission on Sexual Orientation and the Law, whose members were appointed by the governor, will now go to the state legislature. The commission was created by the legislature in June, 1994, to determine how best to address the ways in which same-gender couples are affected by not being able to marry.

"After months of intense research and witness testimony, a government body has finally concluded that there is no legitimate reason for the state to continue refusing civil marriage licenses to same-gender couples who want to make the commitment of marriage," said Rich Tafel of Log Cabin Republicans.

"They looked at all the arguments for and against same-gender marriage and concluded it's wrong for government to say 'no' to people saying 'I do,'" said Tafel.

The commission was created in response to a landmark lawsuit challenging the denial of civil marriage licenses to same-gender couples. In May, 1993, the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled that the "same-gender restriction" on marriage appears to violate the state constitution. The Court held that unless the state can identify a "compelling" justification for discriminating, it must stop. The case, Baehr v. Lewin, is now before the lower court, where the couples are represented by co-counsel Dan Foley of the Hawaii Equal Rights Marriage Project (HERMP) and Evan Wolfson of Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund.

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News Briefs

"The commission's report further strengthens our court challenge, clearly illustrating that the state has no 'compelling' reason to deny same-gender couples the freedom to marry," said Tom Ramsey, Co-Chair of HERMP. "If the legislature fails to end the discriminatory restriction on marriage, we're still confident that the Hawaii Supreme Court will, through the Baehr v. Lewin Case. It was less than 30 years ago that courts took a similar stand, ending the ban on interracial marriage."

The landmark report was hailed by leaders of gay and non-gay organizations nationwide as a key step in educating the public about how the denial of the freedom to marry harms couples and fosters inequality.

"Many Americans have never thought about marriage in connection with lesbian and gay people, or even about the reality that same-gender couples form families that need protection and deserve support," said Elizabeth Birch, Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign. "The commission did its homework, and looked at equal marriage rights fairly and methodically. We invite the public, judges, and legislators in the rest of the country to do the same."

The commission of seven members, headed by highly-respected former Lt. Gov. Tom Gill, represented a diverse range of views. Its report has already been editorially endorsed by Hawaii's two leading newspapers.

DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL POSTPONED

NEW YORK -- A test case challenge

to the military's ban on lesbians and gay men was postponed today when a federal appeals court judge excused himself from the case.

The case, *Able v. USA*, is the first case to challenge in its entirety the law barring lesbians and gay men from openly serving in the armed forces. Brought jointly by the American Civil Liberties Union and Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund on behalf of six servicemembers, the lawsuit contends that the so-called "don't ask, don't tell" legislation is discriminatory, based solely on prejudice, and in violation of free speech and equal protection.

Although the case was scheduled for arguments today, Judge Guido Callabresi recused himself from the appeal this morning in order to avoid any appearance of partiality. While Dean of the Yale Law School, Callabresi was among 119 legal scholars who signed onto a March 1993 letter that voiced constitutional concerns about the military's ban. Government lawyers had raised the issue to the court's clerks in a letter dated today.

Apparently, the two other members on the panel, Judges Pierre N. Leval and Wilfred Feinberg, will remain on the case. A new hearing date will likely be announced in early January after a replacement is selected.

KNOWING VICTIMS WERE LESBIAN "MADE IT EASIER TO KILL" *National Gay & Lesbian Task Force*

Washington, D.C., Dec. 19, 1995...New developments in the case and jail house statements by the confessed killer of two lesbian activists in Oregon have raised the level of concern about the cause of the murders, which have been reported in the press as a "botched robbery."

In a letter to U.S. Attorney Janet Reno today, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) executive director Melinda Paras cited recent statements made by Robert James Acremant, who has been apprehended and has confessed to killing Roxanne Ellis and Michelle Abdill of Medford, Oregon. "Mr. Acremant's reported comments of this past weekend have increased the concerns" about the motives behind the murders, said Paras.

The Oregonian (12/17 and 12/18) and the San Francisco Examiner (12/17) have both reported lesbian-phobic statements made by Acremant while in custody. In press interviews, Acremant said the sexual orientation of victims had nothing to do with the murders, but then goes on to say that the fact they were lesbians "made it easier [to kill them] because I don't like them." He's also quoted

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as saying he did not feel any remorse for "these people." The Examiner story made Acremant's disdain for lesbians even more explicit: "I don't care for lesbians. Bisexual women don't bother me a bit. I couldn't help but think that she's [Ellis] 54 years old and had been dating that women for 12 years; isn't that sick? That's someone's grandma for God's sake.

Could you imagine my grandma a lesbian with another women? I couldn't believe that. It crossed my mind a couple of times -- lesbo grandma, what a thing, huh?"

The Oregonian (12/18) went on to report that Acremant said he asked Roxanne Ellis "out of curiosity" if she and

Abdill were lesbians, a fact the article points out he may actually have already suspected. Apparently, the article says, Acremant had spent time looking over county records and had noted that the victims, who he knew lived together, were listed as co-owners of the property management firm. Ellis told Acremant they were a lesbian couple and that they were open about it. He is quoted as saying, "[i]t kind of made me sick to my stomach that she was someone's grandma," after which he burst into laughter.

Newspaper articles also reported that the suspect's family said that Acremant was desperate for money and that he intended to

rob, not kill, the victims, and that the murders took place after the robbery went wrong. But it has also been reported that money and credit cards were left behind at the murder scene, raising serious questions about the suspect's claim that robbery was the initial motive. Since then the killer has also stated he plans

to sell his story of the murders to the "highest bidder."

"The local gay, lesbian and bisexual community in Medford...and elsewhere believe there are still many unanswered questions," said the letter to Reno. "In any

event, of course, the issue is not just what the suspect's initial motive was, but whether his motive in killing the women had to do with the fact they were lesbians."

BRITISH GAYS TO COLONIZE ISLAND

by Rex Wockner

Gay activists plan to proclaim an independent republic on a small island off the coast of Devon, England, to protest British immigration's restrictive refugee laws, reported the Australian publication Capital Q.

Peter Tatchell, spokesman for the London street-activist group OutRage!, said gays will occupy the island



1607 S. Washington, 373-5885

New Holiday Hours

Mon-Wed	7:30 - 3:30 pm
Thurs-Fri	7:30 - 10:00pm
Saturday	2 - 10 pm

Please Call for Entertainment Schedule

of Lundy, population 12, for one week and erect the gay flag, print gay money and issue gay marriage licenses.

OutRage! spent \$13,000 to rent every available building on the island for the week.

DUTCH LUTHERANS OK GAY BLESSINGS

by Rex Wockner

A synod of the 20,000-member Dutch Lutheran Church OK'd church blessings of gay unions this month.

The synod declared: "There are no theological arguments against blessing two people who are strongly committed to one another, faithful and dedicated. ... The blessing of a commitment for life between two women or two men can give extra meaning to a relationship."

The synod also called for reconsideration of the theological notions of "wedding vows," "fidelity" and "blessing."

Overheard

by Rex Wockner

"It's such a freeing experience, not only to be out but to be vocal about it. I left Czechoslovakia for a lot of reasons; there if you spoke your mind, you would go to jail. So for me to be in this country and be quiet because somebody else is uncomfortable with it -- well, I'm not going to do that!"

--Tennis legend *Martina Navratilova* to *The Advocate*.

"How can you be a Republican when you're gay? It just doesn't compute!"

--*Navratilova* to *The Advocate*.

"Procreation is used as an argument [against gay marriage] but interestingly enough, no heterosexual couples are asked that question. If two 75-year-olds walk in for a marriage license, they don't say, 'What the hell are you doing here?'"

--*Thomas Gill*, chairman of *Hawaii Gov. Benjamin Cayetano's Commission on Sexual Orientation and the Law*, which this week recommended legalization of gay marriage. *Gill* is a former lieutenant governor and Congressman.

Heterosexuals And the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Movement

by *Rev. Meg Riley* co-chair, *Advisory Board*, *And Justice for All*

In April of 1993, I was one of more than 2,000 Unitarian Universalists who, led by our President and Board of Trustees, joined hundreds of thousands of others and marched in Washington, DC, for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Equality.

Since that time, I have repeatedly heard others who were there describe that event. When the person speaking is gay, lesbian or bisexual, the punchline, spoken with something akin to awe, is almost always: "And at least half of the UU's marching were heterosexual!"

Many of the heterosexuals tell a different story, more like this: "As we marched, hundreds of people, mostly gay, called to us from the side of the streets and profusely thanked us for our witness. I had never been aware that it mattered so much to gay people that heterosexuals march with them."

My heterosexual friends who march in the P-FFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) contingents in marches always tell similar stories, of being thanked, often by people in tears. Why? What is it that makes those of us who are lesbian, bisexual and gay so surprised, so emotional at the presence of support from our heterosexual allies?

Perhaps it's the deeply engrained, implicit policy of "don't ask, don't tell" that governs most of our lives. That policy keeps us uncertain of our worth, our value, or even our existence, in the heterosexual world. We are so accustomed to looking in the mirror and seeing no reflection--or a distorted, negative one--that when we see one which is compassionate and supportive, we are overcome with emotion.

Perhaps it's because our lives don't seem to matter to anyone but us. Our jobs, no matter how well we do them, are often held only at the cost of silence about our home lives. Our children, regardless of the quality of our care for them, may be taken from us at will. Our faith, no matter how deep and sustaining, is called blasphemy. Our military service, far from being a matter of pride to our country, is labelled a threat to national security. Whether we're celebrating our paper anniversary or our golden one, we are still "single" in hospital emergency rooms or on tax forms.

When we don't see ourselves and our lives reflected back to us accurately in the non-gay world, we begin to believe that our lives are marginal, freakshows, of no interest to anyone but ourselves.

Student Organizations

Lambdas of West Texas A&M
Box WT 335, Canyon, TX 79016
Saul Reyes, Co-Chair, 374-3054
Becky Cavitt, Co-Chair 655-5769

Pink Triangles Student Group
Amarillo College
Contact Rob Mills, 371-5300

Religious Organizations

Metropolitan Community Church
2123 S Polk, Rev. Bob Finch
Office hours M-F 9 AM 1 PM 372-4557
Sunday Services 10:30 AM & 6 PM
Children's Sunday school during service
Monday 12 Noon, Brown Bag Prayer
Wednesday 7 PM, Discussion Group

St Andrews Episcopal Church
1601 S. Georgia, Father Bill Nix
376-6316

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
4901 Cornell
Sundays, 11 am (Summers, 10 am)
355-9351

Services

Family Support Services
Domestic violence, rape crisis, counseling services. Fees charged on a sliding scale.
900 S. Lincoln
372-3202
1-800-749-9026 hotline/helpline

National Gay & Lesbian Task Force
1734 14th St. NW
Washington, D.C., 20009
(202) 332-6483

National Gay & Lesbian Teen Hotline
1-800-347-8336
Open 6 PM to 11 PM Central Time

Northwest Texas Public Services
D.J. Wyatt Community Health Ctr.
351-7220

Panhandle AIDS Support Organization (PASO)
604 W. 8th, 372-1050
1-800-388-4879 Hotline/Crisis number

Parents & Friends of Lesbians/Gays (P-FLAG), Amarillo Chapter
Parents and friends, you have a support group, too! Call Washington Square for times and dates.

The Pavilion Northwest Texas Healthcare System
Intensive Outpatient Program/
Addictive Disorders
354-1835

Shepherd House (call PASO)
MWF 11:30 - 1:30
Home cooked meal services for HIV/AIDS individuals

Sisters (Women's Discussion Group)
MCC 2123 S Polk
Every Sunday 7 PM

Speak Out! Human Rights Campaign Fund Information
1-800-777-HRCF

Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas
P.O. Box 2579
Austin, TX 78768
(512) 474-LGRL

People For The American Way
2000 M Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036

Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (P-FLAG)
Travis McBride 358-4810 or
Wash. Square 373-5885

Bars

Alexander's Lounge
1219 W 10th Ave
372-7414

Maggie's Disco
1515 S Harrison
371-9312

The Ritz
322 W 10th Ave
372-9382

Sassy's
309 W 6th Ave
374-3029

The Classifieds
519 E. 10th St.
374-2435

Gay Friendly Businesses/Organizations

Amarillo Bowl
4100 Wolflin
352-5681

Hastings Books and Video
2001 S Georgia - Gay/Lesbian book section & magazines
4301 W 45th - Lambda book section

Kinko's Copies
3801 Olsen Blvd
Open 24 hours

Italian Delights, Inc.
2710 W 10th Ave
Queer Dinner Club (QDC) meets 7:30 PM on the third Thursday of the month. Everyone is welcome!

Valley Lodge Family Motel & The Hole Thing Donut Shop
PO Box 304 - Main Street
Red River NM 87558
Reservations: 1-800-951-2262
Information: (505) 754 2218

Via Veneto
1108 N Pierce
Same owners as Italian Delights, open for lunch only.

Gay Owned Businesses

Washington Square Cafe & Bookstore
1607 S. Washington
373-5885
Teas, coffees, light dining, books, magazines, entertainment and art.
Closed Sunday.

French & Co. Realtors
Paul D. French, Owner
4200 Ridgcrest, Suite A-5
356-9086

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If we are going to know that we matter, that our lives have meaning not just for us but for the world, we need to know that it is noticed when we are beautiful, when we are kind, when we are abused, or when we are marginalized. In short, I want heterosexuals to become our allies, and to become activists for our equality.

I don't want activism by heterosexual allies as a replacement for activism by gay, lesbian bisexual and transgendered people on our own behalf, but in addition to that activism. I don't look to heterosexual people to do anything for us, but to do it with us. I want the world to know that our issues are human issues, that our lives matter, no more and no less than anyone else's.

I want hundreds of educated heterosexuals to show up at their town square every time homophobia is promoted in City Council meetings. I want dozens of heterosexuals to write well thought out letters to their local newspapers each time homophobic language or behavior occurs. I want scores of compassionate heterosexuals to speak up each time scripture is used as a hammer to beat on those who are "an abomination".

Next time there's a March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian and Bi Equality, I want every single one of the millions of marchers to say, in a tone akin to awe, "And at least half of the people marching were heterosexual!"

I am proud to serve as advisory co-Chair for And Justice for All, a new national group created to mobilize heterosexual advocacy for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality.

ALGA seeks to provide an organization that will encourage healthy acceptance of our lifestyle both within our community and the population at large. Our annual budget is funded solely by your membership fees. Membership guarantees reduced rates for future ALGA-sponsored events. Those same fees pay for printing and mailing of this newsletter, sponsors the annual ALGA Gay Pride Picnic, camping trips, future workshops and our hotline costs. All mailings are discrete, and our mailing list will never be provided to any other agency.



We are happy to provide the **ALGA UPDATE** to people who cannot afford to purchase a subscription; however, we ask that anyone who can afford to subscribe, do so to keep the exchange of information flowing, our community informed, and allow for more activities in the future.

- \$50 Silver membership (3 year membership, and 36 issues)
- \$35 Household annual membership for 2 adults (with 12 issues)
- \$25 Individual annual membership (with 12 issues)
- \$10 Student/PWA/Low Income membership (with 12 issues)

Name(s): _____

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Please make all checks payable to ALGA