



Blind LGBT Pride The “Inside Out” Newsletter

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Blind Pride is a Special Interest affiliate of the American Council of the Blind and is dedicated to facilitating the free exchange of ideas, opinions and information relative to matters of concern to blind people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Visit us at www.blind-lgbt-pride.org

EDITOR'S NOTE:

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From The Presidents Desk

By Don Brown

If you haven't followed the recent discussions on Blind Pride's discussion list, you might be surprised to learn that I am again President of this great organization. This came about as a result of the unfortunate and untimely health-related resignation of former President Don Wilson, In Reno, I was elected Vice President and shortly following the conference and convention, BPI's Board of Directors unanimously voted to accept Don Wilson's resignation from the Presidency. Don was subsequently elected by the board to serve in the position of Immediate Past President, where he will serve in a less demanding capacity. BPI's constitution requires the Vice President assume the office of President in the event of the President's separation from the presidency.

So, here I am.

My becoming President resulted in a vacancy in the Vice President position. BPI's Board of Directors elected Tim Miles to serve as Vice President. Tim is a former board member and was very successful as BPI's fundraiser. You will hear more from Tim as the year progresses.

I view the challenge of leading Blind Pride's Board of directors and this organization, which is the only organization of its kind in the world, as an honor and welcomed opportunity to incorporate those programs and policies that you the Membership have rather clearly expressed.

Obviously, the board and I can work best by having your involvement. To that end, by the time you read this column each of Blind Pride's board members (who are Committee Chairs) will have solicited your involvement on one of their committees via BPI's discussion list. Please respond to them. Your active participation is absolutely key to sustaining and growing this organization.

Speaking of active participation, BPI continues to search for an individual who would have an interest in being its National Delegate. While the delegate participates on the board level through out the year, she/he will also be BPI's representative at the National Conference and Convention. Given the travel and lodging expenses associated with this position, BPI's Board of Directors, during its August meeting, voted to cover a portion of the travel and/or lodging expenses. Get more details about the national Delegate position in the pages of this newsletter.

Along with strengthening existing committees and developing a more interactive and responsive membership relations component, with your help, BPI's board of directors will take on the following projects for the 2011/2012 year:

TARGETTED OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS:

The Outreach committee will begin reaching out to interested individuals living in Canada.

A campaign to outreach to seniors (50 and over) who are blind and vision impaired is currently underway.

WOMEN'S TELECONFERENCE SUMMIT:

This effort will be designed to provide women members and friends an opportunity to connect with each other and identify needs and interests an how they might play a more prominent role in BPI The summit is slated for early Spring. Stay tuned for details as they develop.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND CONVENTION

While preliminary planning ideas are currently being tossed around, actual planning will begin at the beginning of the year.

By the way, the 2012 conference and convention will be held in Louisville, Kentucky at the Galt House Hotel. It is not too early to start making plans to attend. If the ideas being tossed around are any indication, Louisville in 2012 will be BPI's best planned and attended convention.

Did you know that Blind Pride was chartered by the American Council of the Blind as a Special Interest Affiliate at the Galt house Hotel in Louisville in 2000?

You can provide input and follow developments on each of these projects by attending BPI's monthly board meetings and/or reviewing meeting minutes. Visit www.blind-lgbt-pride.org for details.

I am excited to report BPI has officially made the leap into the world of social networking. Soon BPI can be visited on Face Book and be followed on twitter. Stay tuned for details on launch dates.

As you can see BPI has a lot on its plate and the board hit the ground running with having its first meeting quickly following the close of the 2011 conference and convention.

The board has demonstrated a renewed focus and commitment to upholding the principles, goals and objectives of Blind LGBT Pride International, and it welcomes, encourages and looks forward to your active participation in the evolution of BPI.

As always, I hope you enjoy this edition of Inside Out.

Convention Report

For reasons discussed in the following article, Blind Pride's 2011 conference and convention in Reno was unfortunately scaled down.

BPI's Treasurer, George Abbott, chaired the business meeting.

The Membership approved a constitutional amendment regarding the attendance of board members at monthly meetings, while rejecting a proposed amendment on members voting remotely.

Don Brown was elected to the position of Vice President and Kevin Ratliff was elected to the position of Secretary. Timothy Miles term expired and he left the board.

The 2012 Conference and Convention will be held at the Galt house hotel, in Louisville Kentucky, from July 6th -14th, 2012.

For more information visit www.blind-lgbt-pride.org

Disappointment in Reno

There is no denying it; this year's annual convention in Reno was a disappointment. Unfortunately, events that preceded the convention resulted in the cancellation of all BPI programs except for the business meeting.

In February of 2011, one of the board members resigned, resulting in a shortage of available personnel on the board. The circumstances surrounding this resignation will not be discussed here, but this resignation left the board with a number of loose ends regarding convention programs.

Shortly after this, the board took a second look at some of the proposed events slated for the convention, and reached the conclusion that some of the proposed events would not be workable at the convention for various reasons. This resulted in the urgent need to search for programs to fill in those gaps.

As the board tried to work out a number of technical issues relating to other programs slated for the convention, time was slipping by, creating intense pressure on the board to find solutions.

A few weeks prior to the convention, President Don Wilson said that he was having medical problems that would require attention and that he would not be able to travel to Reno. Other board members announced that they would not be able to attend the convention due to medical or financial issues. It was at this point the board realized there was a problem, mainly the lack of human resources to carry out programs at the convention. After much discussion, the board decided that canceling events was the only solution. With further discussion and scrambling, it was decided that the business meeting and the elections for open board seats could be carried out.

Once the cancellations were announced publicly, a few members offered to help. The board appreciated these offers and discussed how such offers might be utilized. But the cancellation process had already been set in motion and ACB had been officially notified.

The board of directors has apologized to the membership for this turn of events. At this point, we seek to move forward, and get to work on making next year's convention better than ever.

The board fully understands the disappointment that members felt due to the cancellations. We, too, were saddened by these events. However, we hope that you will be able to understand why we felt forced to handle things as we did.

Our goal remains to serve the membership to the best of our ability. In that pursuit, we now hope to move forward to work toward next year's convention.

Thank you for your understanding.

**Sincerely,
BPI Board of Directors**

Trivia Spot

In 1981, tennis superstar Martina Navratilova became the first female professional athlete to come out of the closet while still actively competing.

Chaz Bono Joins Dancing With the Stars

By Hayley Rose Horzepa

In the past year, Chaz Bono has become the unofficial spokesperson for the transgender community. Right now, gay marriage in the US is an issue that most people are familiar with to some extent, while transgender individuals still puzzle and scare some people. With the opposition that gay Americans have received for demanding the same rights attained by their heterosexual neighbors, you can only imagine how a transgender individual would be received. The subject itself is still very taboo and saved for satirical movies like *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Often, transgender and transsexual individuals are considered more of a freak or joke than individuals with thoughts and feelings.

When I heard that Chastity Bono was going through a sex change, I was as surprised as much as anyone else. I've known several transgender people, none of whom have made the transition. It is understandable why there are not more people in the world like Chaz Bono. Most people would not be open and comfortable being their true selves when it so brazenly goes against the grain of what public opinion currently deems acceptable. But imagine what it would feel like to be born in the wrong body. That is often how a transgender person describes the way they feel about themselves.

One of my best friends, Jordan (not her birth name but a name she gave herself at the age of five) recently came out in a big way. From the time she was a little girl, she was attracted to the same sex. In addition to these feelings, she also felt like a boy trapped inside a girl's body. Growing up, Jordan was considered a tomboy by many and dressed more like a boy than a girl. She gravitated towards sports and even then, her androgynous look was no accident.

Jordan grew up and as an adult was an undeniably beautiful woman, however, the prettier she looked the more uncomfortable she felt. Slowly she chopped off her beautiful ebony hair a few inches at a time, until it was very short. This was the beginning of her transformation into the Jordan she always wanted to be; the Jordan she always felt like on the inside.

Soon after, she told her friends and family that she was a lesbian. Everyone was supportive though some were confused. Jordan lived in small town New Hampshire, a state known for its conservative family values. Rather than shun her, her presence actually opened up the minds of people who believed in traditional Christian values. Though their religion disagrees with homosexuality and likely transgenderism, her community still treated her with love and acceptance.

I greatly admire my friend Jordan's courage to come out and unapologetically be the person she was meant to be. I also admire Chaz Bono for the same reason. People like them reshape the public's view of transgender people just by being in the forefront. By putting themselves out there, more and more people will understand what it means to be a transgender individual.

So will Chaz Bono's gig on *Dancing with the Stars* offend some people? Most definitely. What's more important is the courage that Chaz lends and will continue to lend to other transgenders who haven't yet gained the courage to be themselves. His appearance on *Dancing* could make a big difference in a lot of lives.

People like Chaz and Jordan serve as inspirations for all; like them, we should always speak the truth within our hearts and strive to honor the unique thumb print within our spirits in a bold and unapologetic way.

Old Fears

Afraid Of Renewed Harassment, Many LGBT Seniors Return to The Closet
by Jeff Krehely — *Playboy Magazine*

For most of her adult life, 64-year old Denise Bonenfant lived as an openly gay woman. She spent half those years—more than three decades—in a loving relationship with her partner, Sunny Toscano, who died in 2007 from cancer and heart disease. But as Toscano grew sicker and she and Bonenfant witnessed a close friend being denied access to her dying partner by estranged family members, they decided to go back into the closet, telling Toscano's doctors and nurses that they were sisters. "I fought so hard to get out of the closet," Bonenfant explained to the gay rights organization SAGE as part of its 2011 policy brief "LGBT Older Adults and Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act." "But nobody was going to keep us away from each other."

Bonenfant's experience is hardly atypical. As baby boomers age, so too does the first generation of LGBT people who pioneered an open lifestyle. There are about 1.5 million lesbian, gay and bisexual seniors in the U.S. today—a total that's expected to double in the next 20 years. (It's difficult to estimate the number of transgender seniors.)

None of them is afforded the same rights as their heterosexual counterparts because many federal and state safety-net programs are based on the presumption of a marriage between two straight people. For example, Social Security provides extra benefits and the estate-tax laws provide tax exemptions to opposite-sex spouses. But only five states and Washington, D.C. allow same-sex couples to marry, and even then, the Defense of Marriage Act prevents the federal government from recognizing these unions. Additionally, policies that regulate hospital visitation, medical decision making and inheritance rights prioritize blood and legal relatives over longtime partners and friends. For her part, Bonenfant was unable to cover Toscano's medical expenses through her insurance policy. Instead, they used their savings and credit cards to pay hospital bills, leaving Bonenfant nearly broke upon Toscano's death—a common outcome for older same-sex couples since so many laws treat them as legal strangers.

Then there are the social stigmas, which are still pervasive despite the gains the gay rights movement has made in the past 40 years. Whether they lived openly or not, today's

LGBT seniors came of age at a time when their relationships and core identities were declared illegal, called immoral and considered a national security risk. Basically, they can't shake the fear that comes with growing up in yesterday's hostile environment. As such, according to the MetLife Mature Market Institute, almost 20 percent of lesbian and gay baby boomers aren't confident that health care professionals will treat them with respect and dignity as they age. Another study, published by the Journal of Homosexuality, found that one third of gays and lesbians assume they will need to hide their sexual orientation if they move into a retirement home. Finally, further research by the Lesbian and Gay Aging Issues Network shows that about two thirds of Area Agencies on Aging, the local organizations that deliver services to the country's seniors, provide no training related to LGBT seniors for their staff, and less than 10 percent provide targeted services to LGBT adults. Not surprisingly, many older gays and lesbians reported feeling anxious about seeking services through their AAA.

The anecdotal evidence seems to confirm these concerns. "I had home attendants who wouldn't wash me because they said they're not homos," 70-year-old Myron Gold explained in the SAGE policy brief. "I even had an aide who wouldn't walk me around the park because he was upset that he would be perceived as gay if he was holding on to my hand." Such treatment is of particular concern because compared with straight or non-transgender seniors, older LGBT people are more likely to be single, childless and estranged from biological family members. In other words, they are more likely to be dependent on professional caregivers to provide emotional and physical support as well as basic needs as they age. And so, LGBT seniors often go to great lengths to hide their sexual orientation and gender identity. This re-closeting involves throwing away LGBT-related books and movies; hiding pictures of partners and asking significant others to leave home when caregivers are present. When receiving care at a retirement home or hospital, many LGBT seniors discourage their partners and/or LGBT friends from visiting because they're afraid being outed will lead to discrimination and harassment by staff or other patients. "They do so to ensure that they will receive the appropriate health care," says Hilary Meyer, director of the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging. Of the assisted-living facilities in her area, Bonenfant told SAGE researchers, "They're all very nice straight people, but I'm no more going to go in there and say, 'Hi, I'm a lesbian' than I'm going to jump off the roof of my house."

Meyer adds that she's heard stories about home health aides who, on learning the sexual orientation of their patient, quoted passages from the Bible to express their disapproval. She also cites a recent case of a transgender woman with Alzheimer's disease at a long-term care facility whose staff refused to respect the woman's gender identity. "Instead, they would dress her in men's clothing—a daily occurrence that was incredibly distressing for a woman already struggling with day-to-day cognitive functioning," says Meyer. At the most extreme, some transgender people have reversed their transitions because they were afraid caregivers—especially those in nursing homes and hospitals—would harass (or assault) them if they discovered their gender identity.

The biggest fear is that LGBT seniors who are wary of how caregivers might interact with them will eschew needed medical services, causing health problems to go undiagnosed until they are untreatable. To say nothing of how pushing away longtime friends and loved ones could exacerbate feelings of isolation and loneliness—something many older people struggle with already, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

As with everything else, no cure-all will solve these problems. That said, marriage equality would help address many of the legal inequities facing LGBT seniors by allowing same-sex couples access to Social Security benefits, family medical leave and spousal impoverishment protections under Medicaid. Additionally, staff and volunteers at any facility or program that receives public funding and provides services to elders—whether hospitals, nursing homes or senior centers—should be required to undergo annual cultural-competency training that is LGBT-inclusive. Navigating end-of-life care and facing death are excruciating experiences. Our laws and health care practices shouldn't make things even tougher for gays and lesbians.

<http://www.lgbtagingcenter.org/newsevents/newsArticle.cfm?n=18>

Are Social Networking Sites Accessible?

Answers from the American Foundation for the Blind

AFB Summary:

Social networking sites like MySpace have become the "soda shops" of the digital age. It's where people meet new people, update friends on life happenings, find jobs, network, discover new music, and express themselves through customized page layouts, photos, music, and videos. MySpace, the top social networking site on the web, has now reached 47.3 million members and is growing by 160,000 new users a day according to news reports. And social networking isn't just for teens. Both MySpace and Friendster draw an older crowd, while Facebook, another popular site, skews younger.

For most computer users, signing up for a social networking site is easy, and it doesn't take long to set up a profile, "pimp your page," search for friends, or add comments on people's "walls" or "pages." But how easy is it for people with vision loss to access these sites using a screen reader such as Window-Eyes or JAWS? The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) set out to answer that question by evaluating four popular social networking sites including MySpace, Facebook, Friendster, and LinkedIn.

Using JAWS and Window-Eyes—popular assistive technology products that provide access to information on a computer screen—AFB evaluated these sites to see if a blind computer user, with basic screen reader skills, could independently register, create a standard profile, post photos, and interact with other group members.

What AFB Found:

The most serious accessibility issue AFB found was the inability to create user accounts on MySpace, Friendster, or Facebook without sighted assistance. This is due to the use of

CAPTCHAs—those abstract renderings of random characters that ask users to retype the word they see on the screen. Also known as the "vision test," CAPTCHAs are meant to keep spam programs out of the system, but unfortunately they also keep out people with vision loss because they are essentially jumbled text embedded in an unlabeled graphic. They are extremely difficult for people with low vision to decipher and screen readers cannot read them because they have no descriptive ALT text. None of the social networking sites offer an audio version—like Google's Blogger now does—or an alternate means of registering for people who are blind. LinkedIn is the only site in the evaluation that did not use a CAPTCHA as part of its registration process.

Cluttered web pages with many links can also complicate usage for a person who is blind. MySpace and Friendster sometimes have more than 100 links on each page that loads—which makes for an overwhelming experience. While sighted users might quickly scan web pages for the most important information, screen reader users generally have to listen to web pages from start to finish, top to bottom, left to right. On sites like MySpace or Friendster, this can mean going through a lot of content before finding the desired link.

Unlabeled links cause problems for people using a screen reader because although the screen reader will read the link, it sounds like gibberish. AFB evaluators found a few cases of poorly labeled or unlabeled links on the sites, but were pleased to find that most of the main features—messaging, adding friends, browsing, editing, and commenting—are accessible.

Because these sites are free, most of them contain several online ads. Ads make it more cumbersome for screen reader users because they have to scroll down the page, and go through the scattered ads, before they can find what they're looking for. This is especially difficult on Friendster because ads are scattered throughout the pages.

Forms are used for many purposes on social networking sites including registering, creating a user profile, searching for members, posting comments, and sending emails and invitations. Most forms consist of edit boxes, combo boxes, radio buttons, check boxes, and buttons to perform an action. Apart from a couple of cases, the overwhelming majority of forms on MySpace, Friendster, Facebook, and LinkedIn are labeled.

Conclusion:

Until MySpace, Friendster, and Facebook offer an alternative to the CAPTCHA, people with vision loss will not be able to independently sign up for these services. But the good news is once someone gets through the CAPTCHA barrier, becoming a MySpace, Friendster, or Facebook user is possible, since the templates for these three sites are fairly well labeled. LinkedIn, the leading business networking site, is the most user-friendly of all the social networking sites because its pages are well labeled, and it does not include a CAPTCHA in the registration process.

There is a bigger learning curve for people using assistive technology because users must go through content line by line, and try to decipher features that are not properly labeled. Though the majority of links and forms AFB looked at are well labeled, the few that are

not made navigation very difficult. When a screen reader encounters graphics without descriptive text, it is impossible for users to understand what the graphic is trying to convey. The same applies to forms, combo boxes, or radio buttons that are unlabeled.

Both MySpace and Friendster allow users to customize their profiles by adding background HTML, graphics, videos, photo loops, animation, and other "bling." When users include graphics and images without descriptive ALT text, it is extremely disorienting for blind users. Facebook and LinkedIn do not allow users to customize their profiles, which make them far easier to browse.

The good news is that making web sites accessible to computer users with vision loss is easier than most think. An overwhelming majority of accessibility problems can be fixed by providing alternatives to CAPTCHAs, properly labeling forms when building web interfaces, and providing ALT text for images, especially those used as navigation links. With a few changes in web design, it is possible to make web pages accessible to the millions of computer users with vision loss worldwide. In fact, the Web Access Initiative (WAI), part of the World Wide Web Consortium, offers extensive guidelines for making web pages accessible, along with explanations and techniques. AFB's web site also contains many tricks and tips for making web sites more screen reader-friendly. In addition, AFB CONSULTING, the consulting arm of the American Foundation for the Blind, offers services to organizations dedicated to having accessible web sites.

Settlement in Philadelphia

By Diane Anderson-Minshall

Lambda Legal announced the resolution of a discrimination complaint on behalf of L.P., a now-18-year-old transgender woman who was physically attacked by other residents and verbally abused by staff at Philadelphia's Youth Study Center every day for almost a year and a half when she lived in the facility. The complaint was processed by the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations against the city of Philadelphia Department of Human Services and the Youth Study Center, among others.

"Youth Study Center's new policies and trainings adopted as a result of this settlement will help to ensure that other transgender youth under the facility's care are safe and don't face discrimination because of who they are," said Flor Bermudez, youth in out-of-home care staff attorney for Lambda Legal. "The resolution of this case means that transgender youth in Philadelphia have one more safe space where they won't be abused and discriminated against but respected and kept safe."

The allegations of the complaint were stunning. According to Lambda Legal, a Family Court judge ordered the Department of Human Services in February 2008 to provide L.P. with all appropriate medical treatment for gender identity disorder, including hormone therapy, and mandated that her female gender identity be respected. However, Youth Study Center staff and administrators failed to treat the girl in accordance with her female identity. They refused to refer to her by her preferred female name or use female

pronouns. Staff also refused her access to clothing and grooming options that matched her gender identity and reprimanded her for acting in a feminine manner. When she asked to be referred to by her preferred female name, a staffer told her, “You ain’t no fucking female, you are a dude. ... Till you get your dick cut off, I’m not going to call you [by your female name].”

In addition, center staff subjected the girl to ridicule and cruel and degrading treatment and allowed abuse by residents on a daily basis. She says she endured verbal harassment, including slurs such as “You’re a faggot,” “Wanna-be-girl,” “You are not a girl,” and “You will never be a girl.” On several occasions the verbal harassment escalated to physical attacks.

The complaint was filed in October 2009, arguing that the center (operated by the Department of Human Services) had violated the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance because L.P. was harassed and discriminated against on the basis of her actual and/or perceived gender identity, sexual orientation, sex, and disability.

According to Lambda Legal, “L.P. and DHS settled this matter on terms agreeable to all parties.” The settlement included revisions to Youth Study Center policies addressing nondiscriminatory treatment of LGBT youth to include specific protections for transgender youth. Now transgender youth will be able to live in a single room on the unit that corresponds to their gender identity and receive hormone therapy. Also, while living in the facility, transgender youth will be called by their preferred name and the pronoun that reflects the youth’s gender identity, even if the youth’s name has not been legally changed. The center will also provide clothing and grooming options to transgender and gender-nonconforming youth throughout their stay at the facility. In addition, the Department of Human Services will provide training to all Youth Center staff on LGBT issues and the city of Philadelphia will pay out an undisclosed amount to the young woman at the center of the case.

“I am happy that the case is settled. I hope that these changes will ensure that no other young transgender person experiences the physical and emotional abuse that I experienced at the Youth Study Center,” said the 18-year-old woman.

Saluting a Gay Rights Trailblazer

By Ricardo Lopez, Los Angeles Times, 08/15/11

Lee Glaze, who led a flower vigil from his Wilmington gay bar in 1968, was recently honored for his life of activism. When a small mob of gay men armed with flowers marched into the LAPD's Harbor Division station late that August night, the desk sergeant appeared startled. “We’re here to get our sisters out!” said the group's ringleader, Lee Glaze, co-owner of a popular Wilmington gay bar that had been raided hours earlier. It was 1968, and Los Angeles police had arrested two of Glaze's male patrons when a plainclothes officer saw one slap the other playfully on the rear. Glaze, an unapologetically effeminate man known as “Lee the Blond Darling,” was furious. He

took to the bar's stage, rallied the crowd and asked if a florist was among them. When someone raised a hand, Glaze told him, "Honey, go get every flower in your shop."

The flower vigil, which lasted until police released the men on bail, would become a footnote in the gay rights struggle, overshadowed by the Stonewall Inn riots in New York a year later. This weekend, Glaze was honored by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a gay rights group recognizable by its membership of men who don nun habits and wear heavy, colorful makeup. "Part of the reason Glaze was chosen for "sainthood" by the Sisters was to highlight that history of discrimination and his role in fighting it," said Chris Recio, a.k.a. Sister Tragedy Ann. Other saints include assassinated San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk and comic Margaret Cho. Few people know of Lee," Recio said. "But he was the genesis of the early movement in L.A".

At age 73, Glaze now lives in Hollywood's Triangle Square Apartments, an affordable-housing complex for aging lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. Although he suffers from cataracts and a back injury, Glaze excitedly recalls his early activism. "These kids today have no idea what it was like back then," Glaze said. It was an adventure when you went out. You had to be careful. A city ordinance prohibited men from dancing with one another. At some gay night spots, skittish bar owners would buzz through only trusted patrons, an effort to keep out undercover vice officers."

Gay men dared not challenge authorities. Rumor had it that police would "out" closeted arrestees to their families and employers. The Rev. Troy Perry, whose date was arrested that August night, credits the petal protest for inspiring him to found the first gay church in Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Community Church. "I'd never seen anyone stand up to the police before," Perry said. Those may have been some nellie fists, but they were brave fists. Glaze didn't set out to become an activist. "I had no idea what I was doing," he said. "I ran a ... good bar. I was just mad the cops kept coming around." In an effort to protect his customers, Glaze said, he made regular visits to the police stations in the area, committing to memory the faces of any vice cops he saw. If they came into his bar, he'd play "God Save the Queen" to warn patrons they were being watched. Other times he'd jump onstage and take the microphone: "Boys, I don't know what's burning, but something is burning! It's getting awfully warm in here."

Glaze's fierce support came with a price. The Patch, which attracted customers from all over Southern California, closed after two years. Black-and-white photos of the era are displayed prominently in his cramped apartment, as well as murals he's painted of Greek gods. In one snapshot, he's interviewing an underwear-clad contestant for the first-ever Mr. Groovy pageant. In another, he's making a dramatic entrance to a glamorous red-carpet event in Hollywood. "I just had a ball then," he said. Despite his physical ailments, Glaze is a live wire, whizzing around his building in an electric wheelchair and peppering fellow residents with greetings. He continues to make appearances at gay rights functions, fighting for what he calls the last hurdle: federal marriage rights for same-sex couples. He says the strides that gay civil rights activists have made in recent years have made the younger generation complacent. The struggles Glaze and his compatriots endured seem so foreign to them, he said. He also laments that some of his more able-bodied neighbors in this elderly community aren't nearly as active as he is. These queens," he said. They're just so old!"

Public Opinion on Same-sex Marriage

Polls Conducted in 2011

A May 2011 Gallup poll indicated that a majority of Americans now supports recognition of same-sex marriage. Support for legal recognition of same-sex marriage outpolled opposition 53% to 45%. Gallup also measured a larger than normal increase as compared to the previous year. Support jumped from 44% to 53% in the last year alone. This 9% increase in 1 year is the highest increase in a single year, indicating that support increased faster in 2011 than any previous year in Gallup history.

Public support for same-sex marriage continues to edge upward. A national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted 2/22/11 – 3/1/11 among 1,504 adults, finds about as many adults now favor (45%) as oppose (46%) allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally. In a Pew Research survey conducted in 2009, just 37% backed same-sex marriage while 54% were opposed. Opposition to same-sex marriage has declined by 19 percentage points since 1996, when 65% opposed same-sex marriage and only 27% were in favor. As has been the case since 1996, there is a wide partisan division on the question of same-sex marriage. Currently 57% of Democrats favor making it legal, while only 23% of Republicans agree. Independents (at 51% in favor) are more similar to Democrats than to Republicans, in part because 46% of Republican-leaning independents are supportive of same-sex marriage, along with 58% of independents who lean Democratic.

A March 2011 telephone-survey of 1005 adults by ABC News and the Washington Post found that, for the first time, the majority of Americans favor same-sex marriage. 53 percent of those polled supported same-sex marriage while 44 percent remained opposed; support was highest among younger Americans and lower among conservatives, Republicans, and evangelicals. Pollster Gary Langster describes this as a "milestone result that caps a dramatic, long-term shift in public attitudes". From a low of 32 percent in a 2004 survey of registered voters, support for same-sex marriage has grown to 53 percent today. Forty-four percent are opposed, down 18 points from that 2004 survey.

In March 2011, Democracy Corps conducted a survey of 1,000 likely 2012 election voters in 50 congressional districts considered political battlegrounds. It asked respondents to rate their feelings on the same-sex marriage issue on a 0-100 scale, with 100 being "very warm" or favorable feelings, and 0 being "very cold" or unfavorable feelings. 42% were on the "cool" or unfavorable side, and 35% were on the "warm" or favorable side.

A CNN/Opinion Research Poll released in April 2011 indicated that more than half of all Americans believe that marriages between gay or lesbian couples should be legally valid. With 51 percent of respondents saying that same-sex marriages should be legal, it is the first time that a CNN poll has found majority support for same-sex marriage. The poll shows that there remains a strong partisan divide on this issue. Same-sex marriage is supported by 64% of Democrats, 55% of independents, and only 27% of Republicans

Portraits Under the Rainbow

Harry Hay (April 7, 1912 – October 24, 2002)

Gay Movement Founder, Progressive Activist

Harry Hay was born in England on the day the Titanic sank. When he was ten years old, he and his family moved to Los Angeles. As a young man, he worked in Hollywood as a ghostwriter and an extra on movie sets, where he met the actor Will Geer (best known for his later role as Grandpa on *The Waltons*). Geer became Hay's lover and introduced him to the American Communist Party. Hay became an active trade unionist and learned the organizing skills he later used to advocate for gay rights.

Despite his homosexuality, Hay married fellow Communist Party member Anita Platky in 1938 because the Party rejected gays. He helped found the Mattachine Society in 1950 to create a network of support for gays. Hay went public with the society in 1951 and he and Platky divorced. Ironically, Mattachine rejected him in the early fifties for his Communist beliefs.

He continued organizing for gay rights, championing the notion that gays represented a political and cultural minority who had to be honest about who they were if they wanted to live authentic lives. He put forth the radical idea that gays could give votes in exchange for ideological support. In 1948, Hay suggested publicly that Vice President Henry Wallace, the Progressive Party's candidate for president, would get the homosexual community's vote if he backed a sexual privacy law. It was a brave act at a time when it was illegal for gays to congregate and the American Psychological Association classified homosexuality as a mental illness.

Hay rejected the idea that homosexuals should assimilate into society—instead he thought they should change it so that gays were accepted as full individuals. He rose up against huge odds in his struggle to give American gays a voice by constantly pushing the margins of acceptability, asking questions, and taking a stand at enormous personal risk.

Hay died of lung cancer in 2002 at the age of 90.

In Review

Outrage (DVD Documentary, 2009)

Review by B. Phelps

This film is an eye-opener, an in depth examination of the extent that closeted gay politicians (and there are many) will go to protect themselves. This protection takes the form of the most vehement method of defense, reaction-formation. The primary point of the film is to question the practice of outing closeted gay politicians who promote and

protect their own careers at the expense of the rights of others. Larry Craig is seen as a rather pathetic figure whose accusations of gay encounters go as far back as the 1980's, long before his last bathroom fiasco. Also interviewed are politicians who have come out of the closet (or been forced out) explaining the freedom attained through honesty. Most interesting is information surrounding the current governor of Florida. The film is riveting from beginning to end. Illustrations of a Freudian slip by a Fox news reporter provide a moment of laughter, while the censoring of an Anderson Cooper (of all people) Bill Maher interview which omits Maher's naming of a gay politician gives question to the beltways conspiracy to protect right-wing gay politicians and their staff. You will be amazed and surprised at the disclosures this film has to offer! A must see. Watch for the Republican conservative who takes his gay "right hand man" all over the world for extended travel but makes sure their arrival is always one day apart.

Around the USA in Brief

OHIO:

Out of a batch of six states whose data analysis was released on July 28, Ohio had nearly double the number of same-sex couples as the next-closest state, Missouri, although in terms of per capita same-sex couples, Ohio was second to last. The six states were Idaho, with .56 percent of households reporting same-sex couples, followed by Wisconsin at .60 percent, Ohio with .62 percent, Missouri with .64 percent, Utah with .66 percent and West Virginia with .69 percent.

Vermont:

The Wildflower Inn in Lyndonville, Vt., bills itself as a "vacation sanctuary" where the welcome mat is rolled out even for the family dog. The inn, nestled in the mountains on 570 acres, was voted Best Family Resort by Yankee Magazine in 2010.

According to a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union that warm Wildflower welcome doesn't extend to gay couples. Court documents filed in Vermont Superior Court claim that when Katherine Baker and Ming-Lien Linsley, a lesbian couple, tried to book their wedding reception at the Wildflower, they were told via email that innkeepers Mary and Jim O'Reilly "do not host gay receptions" because of their "personal feelings."

According to Dan Barrett, an attorney with the Vermont Chapter of the ACLU, that puts the O'Reillys in violation of the law. "We believe this is a straightforward violation. Businesses open to the general public must serve all customers. They cannot turn people away based on sexual orientation. That section of the law has been on the books in Vermont since 1992."

Quarterly Quote

I'm a supporter of gay rights. And not a closet supporter either. From the time I was a kid, I have never been able to understand attacks upon the gay community. There are so many qualities that make up a human being... by the time I get through with all the things that I really admire about people, what they do with their private parts is probably so low on the list that it is irrelevant. (Paul Newman)

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