



The Task Force in the News

Media Highlights

Feb. 6, 2005 – Feb. 14, 2006

Roberta Sklar, Director of Communications

Quotes of the Week:

“*Brokeback Mountain* is incredibly important for our day-to-day work because it clearly touches people at a visceral level. But the tragedy is, that breakthrough is not being replicated at the legislative and political level.”

– Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Associated Press
February 6, 2006

“Our vision, our goal is not equal *rights* – as if what we are seeking is a better dental plan – but to be accepted for what we are, and that is fully human. We are, like everyone else, created in God’s own image and likeness.”

– Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Utah speech
February 11, 2006

Matt Foreman - Utah

1. **Gays are seeking acceptance, not rights, activist says**
Deseret Morning News Feb. 12, 2006

Coretta Scott King

2. **Gay leaders among King mourners**
365gay.com Feb. 7, 2006
3. **Mourning the loss of a leader**
Windy City Times Feb 8, 2006

Massachusetts Bar Attack

4. **Christian groups denounce violence in gay bar attack**
The Christian Post Feb. 6, 2006
5. **Christians blamed for 'gay'-bar rampage**
WorldNetDaily Feb. 10, 2006

Brokeback Mountain

6. **Gay groups hope to capitalize on Oscars**
Associated Press Feb. 6, 2006
7. **Did you hear the one about 'Brokeback Mountain'?**
Associated Press Feb. 6, 2006

David vs Goliath (NRLR Publication)

8. **NGLTF reports on faith groups and LGBT equality**
Windy City Times Feb. 8, 2006
9. **David v. Goliath: The Study**
The Revealer Feb. 2, 2006
10. **Gotta have faith: Task Force reports on religion and LGBT equality**
New York Blade Feb. 3, 2006
11. **US First-ever study of LGBT-affirming religious organizations released**
gmax.co.za (South Africa) Feb. 3, 2006

Winter Party Festival

12. **For love or sex (or just some fun)**
HX Magazine
13. **Winter Party Festival**
LesbiaNATION.com Dec. 16, 2005
14. **Celebrations & events around the world**
Passport Magazine February 2006
15. **Le Winter Party de South Beach**
Fugues: Le magazine des gais et lesbiennes du Quebec Jan. 25, 2006

Other Highlights

16. **Frank and 45 lawmakers ask Rice to explain U.N. denial**
Gay People's Chronicle Feb. 10, 2006
17. **Funds to ban gay unions 92% in-state**
Deseret Morning News (UT) Feb. 9, 2006
18. **You're invited to fight a marriage ban**
The Minnesota Daily Feb. 10, 2006
19. **Anti-gay marriage petition won't make Fla. ballot**
Washington Blade Feb. 10, 2006
20. **Gay Catholics give Pope failing grade on love document**
365gay.com Jan. 25, 2006

GAYS ARE SEEKING ACCEPTANCE, NOT RIGHTS, ACTIVIST SAYS **Former Utahn tells Winterfest gathering to get angry at bias**

Elaine Jarvik

Sunday Feb 12, 2006

Being accepted as "fully human" — that's what the gay and lesbian community wants most, says Matt Foreman.

Foreman, who spent part of his childhood in Utah and is now, 40 years later, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, gave the keynote address Saturday at Salt Lake City Winterfest 2006, a conference sponsored by the local gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender (GLBT) community.

"Our vision, our goal is not equal *rights* — as if what we are seeking is a better dental plan — but to be accepted for what we are, and that is fully human," Foreman told his audience. "We are, like everyone else, created in God's own image and likeness."

Foreman, who attended elementary school in Magna and junior high in Salt Lake City — at a time when "gay" wasn't yet part of the mainstream vernacular but "sissy" was — urged his Winterfest audience to get angry at what he called the "immorality" of discrimination.

It's time, he said, to stop ignoring "the lies of our opponents, their distortions, their disgusting tactics, and the vile things they say about us. . . . You hear them, you see them, you feel their poison seeping into the public discourse and into young and old minds alike."

He took exception to what he called the "gay exception" — the notion that "it is OK to say things about GLBT people in legislatures, in newspapers, on TV that no one, no one could get away with saying about another minority."

He criticized the mainstream media for giving the gay opponents "a free ride and legitimacy"; the Catholic Church for "scapegoating gay people" for decades of sex abuse of children; and the LDS Church for being "the often hidden hand" pushing anti-gay legislation "and certainly never lifting its voice for us."

He also had angry words for Rep. LaVar Christensen, R-Sandy, for sponsoring a bill in the 2006 Legislature that would prohibit counties from offering domestic partner benefits, as well as a bill that some think will void legal agreements between domestic partners — "the very thing he said during the Amendment 3 debate that he did not want to do. He's a damn hypocrite."

On the one hand, Foreman said, the GLBT community can be proud that "no other social justice movement in the history of the world has made as much progress as we have" in the past four decades. On the other hand, he said, anti-gay hate crimes are nearly two times more likely than those motivated by hatred of blacks, GLBT people are three times more likely than others to attempt and commit suicide, and domestic partners are sometimes not allowed to visit each other in hospital intensive care units.

Foreman predicted that within seven years there will be a federal law protecting the GLBT community from discrimination, and that within 25 years "we will have the freedom to marry, coast to coast, including Utah."

In the meantime, he said, "We need to take our pride and anger and move forward with righteousness."



GAY LEADERS AMONG KING MOURNERS

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

February 7, 2006 - 1:00 pm ET

(Atlanta, Georgia) Leaders of the country's largest LGBT civil rights groups were among the mourners Tuesday for the funeral of Coretta Scott King.

The widow of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., died last week. She was 78. Called the mother of the civil rights movement Mrs. King was a longtime advocate of gay rights.

Human Rights Campaign president Joe Solmonese, National Black Justice Coalition executive director, Alexander Robinson and **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force executive director Matt Foreman** joined President and Mrs. Bush, foreign dignitaries, and civil rights leaders in honoring Mrs. King.

King's daughter, Bernice, helped officiate at the service, held at New Birth Missionary Baptist Church where she is an elder.

Although it is the largest Black church in the Atlanta area the venue, and Bernice King's participation, was not without controversy.

In 2004 New Birth pastor Eddie Long organized a march in Atlanta that attracted several thousand people calling for an amendment to the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage.

The march stopped at Dr. King's gravesite where Bernice King lit a torch and handed it to Long, saying, "I believe this day will go down in the history books as the greatest showing of Christ and His kingdom in this century."

Her opposition to LGBT civil rights put her at odds with her mother, illustrating the deep divisions within the black community over same-sex marriage.

The march angered gay civil rights leaders who accused Long and Bernice King of hijacking Dr King's memory.

Until she was disabled by a stroke last August Coretta Scott King frequently spoke out in favor of LGBT civil rights.

Mrs. King called her critics "misinformed" and said that Martin Luther King's message to the world was one of equality and inclusion.

In 2003, she invited the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to take part in observances of the 40th anniversary of the March on Washington and Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech.

It was the first time that an LGBT rights group had been invited to a major event of the African American community and drew the ire of some of the other speakers.

King said her husband supported the quest for equality by gays and reminded her critics that the 1963 March on Washington was organized by Bayard Rustin, an openly gay man.

In March 2004, she told a university audience that same-sex marriage is a civil rights issue and denounced a proposed amendment to the Constitution ban it.

"Gay and lesbian people have families, and their families should have legal protection, whether by marriage or civil union," she said in a speech at The Richard Stockton College in Pomona, New Jersey.

"A constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages is a form of gay bashing and it would do nothing at all to protect traditional marriages."

Gay leaders who attended today's service said this was not the time to dwell on the controversy over the venue and Bernice King.

"The focus should be on Mrs. King and the legacy she leaves," Solmonese told [365Gay.com](#)

Windy City Times

MOURNING THE LOSS OF A LEADER

by Mubarik Dahir
2006-02-08

Coretta Scott King was more than a gay-rights advocate, more than a civil-rights advocate. She was a true advocate of human rights.

When Coretta Scott King died in her sleep Jan. 30 at age 78, America lost one of its most eloquent and forceful activists for gay and lesbian rights.

That statement might surprise some readers, and anger others, who primarily remember Mrs. King, the wife of slain civil-rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as a Black civil-rights heroine. But for more than a decade, Mrs. King was also an unflinching advocate for the equal treatment of gay and lesbian people. She spoke out against the ban on gays in the military, testified on behalf of the Employment Nondiscrimination Act and came out in favor of allowing same-sex couples to marry.

She repeatedly addressed gay and lesbian rights groups and rallies, and spoke valiantly in support of gay causes. Even when it was controversial and unpopular among other Black civil-rights leaders, Mrs. King did not waiver.

Indeed, members of her own family remain split on the issue of gay and lesbian rights, with some descendants of Martin Luther King Jr. vocally opposed to gay and lesbian civil rights.

Some Black leaders, many of whom have their roots in the Black churches, continue to organize actively against gay and lesbian rights, supposedly on moral grounds. Some of them even use Dr. Martin Luther King's name in their crusades. But no one knew the late civil-rights leader like his own wife, and she adamantly maintained that the principles she and her husband established and fought for all their lives must apply to all groups, including gay and lesbian people.

"I still hear people say that I should not be talking about the rights of lesbian and gay people and I should stick to the issue of racial justice," she said in March 1998. "But I hasten to remind them that Martin Luther King, Jr. said, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' I appeal to everyone who believes in Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream to make room at the table of brother and sisterhood for lesbian and gay people." Her history and her standing in the African-American community made her a particularly formidable ally.

While many African-American leaders virulently oppose equating the Black civil-rights movement and the gay-rights movement, Mrs. King embraced the obvious parallels.

"Homophobia is like racism and anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry in that it seeks to dehumanize a large group of people, to deny their humanity, their dignity and personhood," she said in a speech in Chicago in April 1998, just days before the 30th anniversary of her late husband's assassination. "I've always felt that homophobic attitudes and policies were unjust and unworthy of a free society and must be opposed by all Americans who believe in democracy."

Though the phrase "human rights" is perhaps so overused today as to have lost its meaning, Mrs. King was a true champion of that notion. And she made it clear that her vision included gay and lesbian people.

"Freedom from discrimination based on sexual orientation is surely a fundamental human right in any great democracy, as much as freedom from racial, religious, gender or ethnic discrimination," she remarked in a speech at the November 2000 Creating Change conference, a gay-rights convention held annually by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Coretta Scott felt the scourge of discrimination from the very beginning of her life. Born on a farm in Heiberger, Ala., in 1927, she and other little Black children were forced to walk five miles each way to attend a one-room school house in Marion, Ala., while white children rode buses to an all-white school closer to their homes.

But the young woman excelled in her studies, graduating as the valedictorian of her high school and going on to win a scholarship to Antioch College in Ohio. At the university, she immediately joined the civil-rights movement, becoming a student member of the NAACP and the school's Race Relations and Civil Liberties committees.

After graduating from Antioch, she won another scholarship to study concert singing at the prestigious New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. It was in Boston that she met a theology student named Martin Luther King, Jr.

After she finished her degree from the New England Conservatory, she married and moved with her new husband to Montgomery, Ala. From there, Coretta Scott King held a front-row seat in the tumultuous civil-rights movement.

But she was not simply the wife of Martin Luther King Jr. She used her musical talents to stage a series of freedom concerts in some of the country's most distinguished venues, to both highlight the civil-rights movement and raise money for it.

After her husband's death, she founded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. She authored an autobiography, remained active in politics, and campaigned to have Martin Luther King Day established as a national holiday. And along her path, she became an outspoken advocate for gay and lesbian civil rights, as well.

It would not do Mrs. King justice, however, to simply call her a gay- and lesbian-rights advocate. Nor would it be enough to say only that she had been a giant in the Black civil-rights movement.

Mrs. King, like her husband, was one of those truly inspirational leaders who transcended the "me, me, me" that is too rampant in much of contemporary political activism, including in the gay- and lesbian-rights movement.

But I fear in her death that too many gays and lesbians, thrilled that such a stalwart championed our cause, may miss her larger message.

If part of Mrs. King's legacy is to call anti-gay Black leaders on their homophobia, so too should she stand as a reminder to gay and lesbian people to confront the racism that lingers in our own ranks. For almost two years now, I have lived in a predominantly Black neighborhood. I have been shocked at the not-so-subtle racism of many of my gay friends and acquaintances who have come to visit.

Sadly, unlike Mrs. King, it appears that too many gay and lesbian people continue to fail to see the connections that all of us who face discrimination share.

As Mrs. King remarked at a press conference in June 1994, while speaking out in favor of the Employment Nondiscrimination Act: "Freedom and justice cannot be parceled out in pieces to suit political convenience. I don't believe you can stand for freedom for one group of people and deny it to others."

And Mrs. King never did.

THE CHRISTIAN POST

Christian Groups Denounce Violence in Gay Bar Attack

Francis Helguero (francis@christianpost.com)

Monday Feb 6, 2006 posted 9:51AM EST

An attack on patrons at a gay nightclub in Massachusetts earlier last week was denounced by the president of a leading evangelical ex-gay ministry and leaders of a Catholic citizenship group.

The suspect in the New Bedford attack, Jacob Robida, 18, had allegedly assaulted and injured three patrons at the nightclub on Wednesday night with a hatchet, shooting two. Saturday, Robida shot to death an officer attempting to apprehend him and was also fatally injured in a shootout 1,500 miles away in Arkansas. He died in a Springfield, Mo., Hospital Sunday morning.

On Saturday, while the suspect was still at large, Alan Chambers, president of Exodus International, a ministry that teaches "Freedom from homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ," spoke out against the violence in the attack.

"I think the attack is heinous. It's awful, and we condemn violence against any person gay or not," said Chambers, who is also a former homosexual.

According to court papers, police searching Robida's home in New Bedford found Nazi regalia and anti-Semitic writings on the wall, the Associated Press reported.

Larry Cirignano, Executive Director of Catholic Citizenship, based in Boston also denounced the attack. The organization promotes traditional families, has supported a proposed measure to ban gay marriages, has an anti-abortion stance and advocates for the poor.

"Whether or not it was hate motivated or not it's wrong," he said Friday evening.

On Thursday, the president of one of the largest gay and lesbian advocacy groups in the country attributed the attack to the "leaders of the so-called Christian right" who he said taught the "hatred and loathing" that fueled the assault by Robida.

"Individuals like James Dobson of Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council's Tony Perkins, the Rev. Pat Robertson and their ilk are obsessed with homosexuality," said Matt Foreman of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "They use their vast resources, media networks and affiliated pulpits to blame lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people for all the ills of society."

Chambers, in response, said the idea that the attack had been fostered Christian teachings was a "ridiculous notion" and that it had "nothing to do with this type of attack."

He added that the message of prominent Christians who oppose homosexuality as a sin, does not include teaching violence against them.

"I stand with anyone who is against violence, including Dr. Dobson and Tony Perkins who stand against violence as well," said Chambers, adding that the message espoused by most Christians is to show love for someone who is involved in homosexuality rather than hate them.

Raymond Flynn, former mayor of Boston and the current chairman at Catholic Citizenship did not believe the "Christian right" had provoked such an attack.

"I don't believe that at all. I think that just sick people would tolerate that kind of behavior and anyone who resorts to that behavior is a sick person," he said on Friday.

Flynn, who in addition to being mayor had previously held the position of U.S. ambassador to the Vatican mentioned that a similar incident had taken place early during his administration in Boston.

“A group of young people thought they were going to harass and intimidate the patrons at the bar,” recalled Flynn. He said the matter was considered very serious.

“I made clear that this type of behavior would not be tolerated in Boston,” he said, “that this is an establishment that is licensed, that every person who goes there is entitled to safety and the rights of all citizens.”

The former mayor said that following the incident, he sent a letter to all the licensed establishments saying that they would be required to report any similar incidents to the police in the future.

“I don’t care if it’s gay, straight, Indian or whatever, each one will get the same protection,” he said.



CHRISTIANS BLAMED FOR 'GAY'-BAR RAMPAGE

Leading activist group points to Dobson, Robertson, others

Friday Feb 10, 2006 posted 1AM EST

A leading homosexual activist group is blaming a deranged teenager's violent rampage through a "gay" bar in Massachusetts on "hatred and loathing" fueled by Christian groups and leaders such as James Dobson.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Executive Director Matt Foreman noted the Feb. 2 attack by 18-year-old Jacob Robida in a press release that day. Robida – who sports a swastika tattoo and had Neo-Nazi and white supremacist materials in his home – was charged with attempted murder for a hatchet and gun attack that left three men wounded in New Bedford, Mass.

"The hatred and loathing fueling this morning's vicious attack on gay men in New Bedford is not innate, it is learned," Foreman contended. "And who is teaching it? Leaders of the so-called Christian right, that's who. Individuals like James Dobson of Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council's Tony Perkins, the Rev. Pat Robertson and their ilk are obsessed with homosexuality."

Foreman asserted these leaders "use their vast resources, media networks and affiliated pulpits to blame lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people for all the ills of society."

"They disguise their hatred as 'deeply held religious beliefs,'" he claimed.

Foreman also complained of "vicious" opposition to homosexual-rights activists and "hate-filled rantings" by the leaders of two Massachusetts groups, Brian Camenker of the Article 8 Alliance and Ed Pawlick of MassNews.

"The blood spilled this morning is on their hands," Foreman charged.

Article 8 Alliance responded: "It's now becoming clear that homosexual activist groups intend to use this incident as a springboard for a vicious and cowardly series of attacks on anyone who publicly criticizes the homosexual movement – similar to what happened after the Matthew Shepard incident."

"Today" show anchor Katie Couric famously brought up Dobson's Focus on the Family in an Oct. 12, 1998, interview with then-Wyoming Gov. Jim Geringer about Shepard, whose murder was believed to be an "anti-gay" hate crime – a charge recently debunked in an investigation by ABC's "20/20."

Couric asked whether "conservative political organizations like the Christian Coalition, the Family Research Council and Focus on the Family are contributing to this anti-homosexual atmosphere" by suggesting homosexuals can change their sexual orientation.

"That prompts people to say," Couric added in her question, "If I meet someone who is homosexual, I'm going to take action and try to convince them or try to harm them."

After the Nov. 26, 2004, "20/20" show, Focus on the Family sent a letter to NBC News President Neal Shapiro requesting an apology "on behalf of Christians maligned by Couric" but was rebuffed.

Gay Groups Hope to Capitalize on Oscars

AP Associated Press

By JOCELYN NOVECK, AP National Writer

Mon Feb 6, 3:23 PM ET

Jim Gilbert gets goosebumps just thinking about Oscar night.

"It'll be such an important night," says the 61-year-old amateur cowboy and rodeo competitor, who feels that "Brokeback Mountain" tells the story of his own gay life and struggles in a strikingly personal way.

Gay activist groups are anticipating the March 5 Academy Awards, where "Brokeback Mountain" is favored to win as many as eight Oscars, as a rallying point and a crucial moment for their cause.

One group likens it to the April 1997 moment when Ellen DeGeneres came out as a lesbian on her sitcom. Susanne Salkind of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national gay rights group, said Oscar night will be an opportunity to raise gay issues "to another level in American culture."

Last Friday, the group sent e-mails to 120,000 members, encouraging them to hold house parties on Oscar night — just as it did the night DeGeneres came out. It's also sending out "Oscar party kits" to help in recruiting, and is offering prizes of T-shirts, bags and watches, depending on how many new members get signed up.

"We want to transform this social occasion into something much more important," Salkind said.

When Ang Lee's soulful film about two cowboys in love premiered in December, the gay community was delighted — but, in some corners, skeptical that it would play beyond New York and California.

Now, though, the film is a clear hit. It has performed strongly across America, appealing to audiences both gay and straight, male and female. Because of its subject matter, it's one of the most talked-about films in recent memory — and a constant reference for late-night comics and Internet spoofs.

"I wish I knew how to quit you," spoken by the character Jack Twist, is becoming a virtual catch phrase. And the word "brokeback" (used as an adjective, to describe something with gay overtones — sort of), is creeping into the lexicon, too.

It isn't only "Brokeback Mountain" that's making gay rights groups anticipate Oscar night. Two other highly feted movies have gay or transsexual themes: "Transamerica," with best-actress nominee Felicity Huffman as a man preparing for a sex change, and "Capote," with best-actor favorite Philip Seymour Hoffman as the gay author of "In Cold Blood."

"This has been a landmark year," says Neil G. Giuliano, president of GLAAD, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. "By telling our stories, this year's Oscar nominees have helped raise the visibility of our issues and have given millions of Americans a greater understanding of who we are."

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, agrees, but sounds a cautionary note. Just because "Brokeback" is being embraced by Hollywood and popular culture, he says, doesn't mean the real world is catching up.

"'Brokeback Mountain' is incredibly important for our day-day work because it clearly touches people at a visceral level," Foreman said. "But the tragedy is, that breakthrough is not being replicated at the legislative and political level" — on issues such as gay marriage and hate crimes legislation.

"So people see this gay acceptance at the Oscars, and think, 'Oh, everything's good for gays in America.' It's this huge chasm between popular culture and the reality of our lives."

For Gilbert, though, the emotional impact of "Brokeback" is so great that he cannot imagine it won't have a long-lasting effect.

The grandson of a rodeo rider, Gilbert, who works in hospital administration and still competes with his quarterhorse in rodeos, grew up in Michigan. As a teenager he had an early gay relationship — the two young men competed at horse fairs together — but moved away to escape the turmoil and confusion it evoked in him.

His first marriage failed after several years, and he found himself turning to drinking and drugs. A second marriage failed as

well. Then came the love of his life — another man. "We both left our wives for each other," he says. That troubled eight-year relationship ended with his partner's death in 1997.

A few weeks ago, before "Brokeback" came to his hometown of Battle Creek, Mich., Gilbert drove more than 80 miles to Ann Arbor to see the film. He missed the first show by 15 minutes, waited in his truck for the next one, and drove back at midnight, emotionally drained.

"I really felt like I had lived through the experiences they were showing onscreen," he said. The similarities to his own life were striking: his early efforts to deny his gay orientation, his failed marriages to women, the desolation he felt when his male lover died.

Gilbert hopes that any Oscars "Brokeback" wins will bring home to straight Americans — for instance, his fellow church members — that gay people "can share the same love that a heterosexual couple can."

"I know that many people in my church will never see this movie," he says. "But they can't help but be affected by all the people who have seen it, and loved it."

Some of those who do love the movie will be gathering at Woody's, a gay bar in Philadelphia, on Oscar night for one of the fundraising parties for the Human Rights Campaign.

The party's organizer, Norman Baker, says he realized just how deep an impact "Brokeback" was having when his 84-year-old mother, who has failing eyesight and doesn't go to movies often, asked him to take her, noting: "Everyone is talking about this film." He had come out to his mother in 1988, but the two hadn't spoken about his gay life since.

This year's Oscar party, the second annual such gathering, will have a theme, Baker said. Participants will be asked to dress as their favorite movie characters.

"Yes," he said, "we do expect a fair number of gay cowboys."

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Did You Hear the One About 'Brokeback'?

AP Associated Press

By JOCELYN NOVECK, AP National Writer

Mon Feb 6, 6:03 PM ET

Some of the "Top Ten Signs You're a Gay Cowboy," courtesy of David Letterman:

_You enjoy ridin', ropin' and redecoratin'.

_Instead of a saloon, you prefer a salon.

_Native Americans refer to you as "Dances With Men."

Is the bottomless font of "Brokeback Mountain" humor — late-night monologues, fake Internet movie trailers, movie poster imitations — harmless and fun, or insulting?

Most gay groups find it fairly benign, and note that in any case, the movie's overwhelming publicity can only be a good thing.

"Some of the humor may be insensitive, but even that has spurred positive conversation," says Susanne Salkind of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national gay rights group.

But Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, says he's sick of it: "It may be funny, but there is a real element of homophobia. It's making jabs about sex between gay men."

Jay Leno made at least 15 "Brokeback" jokes in January. Many were references to gay sex. One that wasn't: "The cold weather continues to spread across the United States. In fact, down south it was so cold people were shaking like Jerry Falwell watching "Brokeback Mountain."

The Internet is saturated with "Brokeback" imitations. One of the best is a fake movie trailer called "Brokeback to the Future," which uses deftly edited shots from Michael J. Fox's "Back to the Future" to make it look like Marty McFly and that wacky Dr. Emmett Brown are falling in love. There's also "Top Gun 2: Brokeback Squadron," with Tom Cruise and Val Kilmer.

And then there are the poster imitations. Like "Kickback Mountain," with the faces of indicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff and Rep. Tom DeLay superimposed over those of Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal.

Andy Borowitz, author of The Borowitz Report.com, says people get insulted by everything — "so the safest bet is to make jokes about everything."

Besides, he says, "I run into so few gay cowboys in Manhattan. So I think if I'm at a cocktail party and I make a good 'Brokeback' joke, I'll be safe. I guess if I were on a ranch and there were a few strong, silent types, I'd be careful."

Of the movie's iconic line, "I wish I knew how to quit you," Borowitz says he's "hoping it'll become the new 'Show me the money.'"

Paul Rudnick, a playwright and comedy writer, sees the humor as coming from heterosexual men who are both fascinated and very uncomfortable with the content of the movie.

"They're not quite sure what to make of it," says Rudnick, who is gay. "They know their wives are going to fall in love with the movie, and with the men in it."

Rudnick hasn't written about "Brokeback" yet — but only because he'd have to find something really original.

"Just joking about a gay cowboy isn't enough anymore," Rudnick says. "If you're going to joke about it now, you really have to be up to the challenge."

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On the Net:

"Brokeback to the Future" video: <http://www.youtube.com>

Windy City Times

NGLTF REPORTS ON FAITH GROUPS AND LGBT EQUALITY

by Andrew Davis

2006-02-08

In an audio press conference Jan. 31, **the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)** discussed a report that revealed a network of 2.5 million people willing to fight for LGBT equality. The news was welcome to those who say that they have endured constant attacks from the religious right.

The study, entitled "David v. Goliath" and conducted by the National Religious Leadership Roundtable (an interfaith collaborative under NGLTF's umbrella) , discusses three types of faith-based groups that secular progressive organizations can tap as resources: denominations, denominational networks and bridge-builders. Denominations are LGBT-identified or -inclusive, while the networks (or chapters) are LGBT-related but are mostly organized within traditional religious groups. Bridge-builders are religious organizations that deal with faith, LGBT issues and some other identity-based facet, such as race or gender; examples include Queer Asian Spirit and Al-Fatiha, a Muslim LGBT organization.

During the call, Matt Foreman, NGLTF's executive director, said often overlooked are "the vital and robust discussions that are going on about our rights in churches and synagogues across the country." He added that the progress occurring in religious institutions actually "outstrips what's going on in our state legislatures."

Richard Lindsay, an NGLTF communications associate and co-author of the study, said that "we set out to create a snapshot of progressive people of faith who are working on issues that affect the gay community." He then discussed the methodology involved in compiling the report and talked about the three aforementioned categories of organizations. He also noted that the report is "representative as a cross-section of the community but is [certainly] not exhaustive."

Rev. Rebecca Voelkel of the Institute for Welcoming Resources talked about the opposition to the pro-LGBT religious groups. "Radical right organizations had been relying on the Communist threat to raise funds," she said. "However, because this particular enemy as fallen, [they felt the] need to shift to a new enemy—and that's where homosexuality came in."

See www.theTaskForce.org .

the revealer

DAVID V. GOLIATH: THE STUDY

Feb 2, 2006

The **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's National Religious Leadership Roundtable** has released a new report this week, taking inventory of all LGBT-friendly churches and religious groups, in hopes that the gay community can find ways to mobilize these progressive religious groups in defense of gay rights. The report, modestly-titled, "**David v. Goliath: A Report on Faith Groups Working for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality (and What They're up Against)**," urges liberal foundations to partner with, and even fund, the gay-friendly churches, as conservative foundations have supported their like-minded churches.

GOTTA HAVE FAITH

Task Force reports on religion and LGBT equality

Kerry Eleveld

Feb 3, 2006

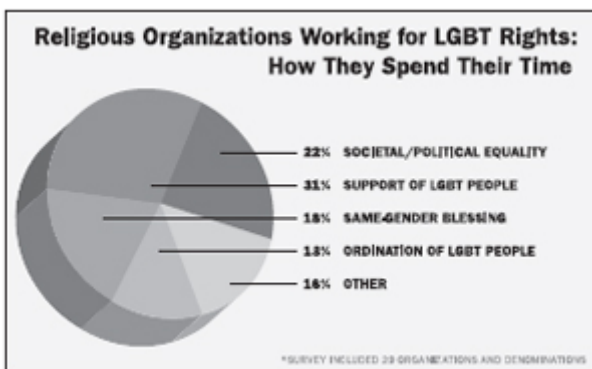
The **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** released a comprehensive report last week detailing the efforts of faith groups that work to achieve LGBT equality. The Task Force started out interviewing about 100 religious organizations in the United States, then narrowed the field down to 29 leading religious bodies, representing an estimated 8,300 congregations and 2 million people.

Richard A. Lindsay, who co-authored the report with Jessica Stern, said the main impetus for the research was to help bridge the gap between secular progressive organizations and religious organizations that share the goal of advancing gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality.

“One of the important pieces that came out of this report is that some of the most important debates on the issue of LGBT rights are not taking place in Congress — they’re taking place in religious denominations,” said Lindsay. **“For so many religious people, how their church is going to respond to LGBT people is their primary point of engagement on this issue.”**

The Rev. Rebecca Voelkel from the Institute for Welcoming Resources, one of the pro-LGBT organizations surveyed, said the 2004 elections served as a real wake up call for the secular progressive movement to take the faith community more seriously in the struggle for equality and justice. Religious organizations working on LGBT issues have been hit from both sides in the past, she said. “We’ve been maligned for being LGBT in the religious community, and maligned for being religious in the LGBT Community.”

Part of the problem has been a simple lack of understanding. “It’s important for progressive secular organizations to realize these faith groups are interested in spiritual transformation – that their primary goals are spiritual rather than simply being political or trying to win an election,” said Lindsay. “Secular progressive organizations need to learn to relate their goals for societal transformation to the goals that people of faith have for spiritual transformation.”



One of the most striking areas of the report found that, relative to anti-gay religious organizations, pro-gay religious organizations are outfinanced by an 8-to-1 ratio. Lindsay said they compared anti-gay and pro-gay groups from four major Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church. It was an important comparison to make, but also very difficult.

“There’s so many different categories of organizations working against LGBT equality – organizations working within denominations, those working outside of denominations such as Focus on the Family,” said Lindsay, referring to Dr.

James Dobson's conservative religious organization. In terms of funding, he added, "The religious right and the right wing do not have a problem blurring that line to the extent that it's being spent for spiritual purposes and political purposes."

Voelkel noted that the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD), another ultra-conservative religious organization, funds anti-gay movements within different denominations. In 2003, IRD spent about \$320,000 in the United Methodist church, \$155,000 in the Episcopal Church USA, and \$50,000 in the Presbyterian Church USA. Voelkel said all of these denominations are experiencing rifts around the gay issue, and IRD hopes to control the outcome of that debate.

Historically, Voelkel said, movements for equality and justice are always underfunded. "If you look back on the civil rights movement, they were completely outgunned in terms of money," she said.

Although she didn't see fixing the 8-to-1 deficit in the short term, she said simply raising the consciousness of the members of progressive organizations is a step in the right direction.

Beyond funding disparities, Lindsay said the other opportunity here is for the secular progressive movement to collaborate with religious organizations already engaged in the struggle for equality. "Progressive organizations hoping to change hearts and minds on the issue of LGBT people would be making a terrible mistake not to reach out to these networks of people of faith that are changing hearts and minds in their denominations and religious organizations every single day," said Lindsay.



US FIRST-EVER STUDY OF LGBT-AFFIRMING RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS RELEASED

Feb 3, 2006

WASHINGTON, D.C. —The **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force National Religious Leadership** Roundtable has released a groundbreaking study on the resources, challenges and opposition to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender-affirming religious organizations. The study, ***David v. Goliath: A Report on Faith Groups Working for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality (and What They're Up Against)***, by Richard A. Lindsay and Jessica Stern, surveys 29 organizations, including large denominations and independent congregations.

"This report shows that some of the most important debate over lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality is not happening in Congress, but in religious denominations," said Matt Foreman, executive director of the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**. **"The organizations in this report, and many others like them, are winning the hearts and minds of people of faith in spite of tremendous obstacles and meager resources — it's truly David v. Goliath."**

In recent years, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people have faced unprecedented attacks from a highly organized religious right. *David v. Goliath* outlines the "parallel" progressive faith movement that welcomes LGBT people, and has grown simultaneously with the secular rights movement. It reveals the intense opposition to these progressive faith groups and the huge forces waged against them by the anti-LGBT industry, which has unabashedly and effectively rallied conservative people of faith to its cause.

The report includes large denominations and independent congregations such as the United Church of Christ, Unitarian Universalist Association and Congregation Beth Simchat Torah; LGBT denominational affinity groups such as DignityUSA (Catholic LGBT organization) and the Institute for Welcoming Resources (mainline Protestant LGBT organization); and "bridge-building" organizations such as Al-Fatiha (Muslim LGBT organization) and Queer Asian Spirit, which explore the intersections of religious or ethnic minority identities and LGBT identity.

Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, executive officer of the Institute for Welcoming Resources, said, "There has been a concerted effort from the conservative political establishment, through secular organizations like the Institute on Religion and Democracy, to influence the mainline Protestant churches, create schism on the issue of lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people, and lure the denominations into a hard-right ideology, which would represent a vast and historic shift in the nation's religious landscape."

David v. Goliath also reports on faith organizations outside the mainline denominations that are working with populations that face issues of intersecting identities of ethnicity, race, national origin, gender or HIV-positive status, combined with being LGBT.

"When you're black, HIV-positive and transgender, and you are looking for a faith community to support you with your physical, emotional and spiritual needs, you are in the most absolutely vulnerable position of people in our society," said Bishop Yvette Flunder, founder and senior pastor of City of Refuge Church in San Francisco. "Someone's got to provide the bridge for people at the intersection of these identities to connect them to the services they need. Someone's got to give them the loving community they need to survive."



FOR LOVE OR SEX (OR JUST SOME FUN)

by *Bill Stevenson*

If you need a break from the cold, try one of these four fun gay destinations for sunning, dancing, drinking, tricking and romancing (hey, it's Valentine's Day, after all).

South Beach, Florida

Why: Thousands of hot men (especially Latinos); the famous beach and its happening gay section; lots of gay and gay-friendly bars and clubs; authentic Cuban food and fresh seafood; it's only three hours from New York by plane; and, oh yeah, it's usually nice and warm - but not yet unbearably hot and humid - in February and March. If you want to maximize your muscle men exposure, visit during the **Winter Party**, which is running March 2-7 (winterparty.com). Highlights include the Friday-night party at the club Space with DJs Manny Lehman and Tony Moran, the Saturday pool party with Phil B and the giant Sunday beach party with Roland Belmares. Looking for culture? Margaret Cho performs Saturday night at the Jackie Gleason Theater.



WINTER PARTY FESTIVAL

12.16.05

Tickets are now on sale for the 2006 Winter Party Festival, one of nation's largest social and party events geared toward the gay community. An estimated 10,000 people are expected to converge on Miami March 1-6 for Winter Party, presented by Bacardi Limón. Now in its 13th year, Winter Party is a 6-day celebration of the social and cultural landscape of Miami, with proceeds benefiting the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. Tickets may be purchased online at www.winterparty.com.

Official Winter Party Festival events are held at several of the most popular nightclubs and venues in town, featuring a roster of world-renowned deejays. The festival kicks off on Wednesday, March 1, with a welcome reception and Movie Under the Stars, and culminates with the world's largest Beach Party on Sunday, March 5.

The deejay talent roster includes Phil B, Joe Gauthreaux, Kimberly S, Manny Lehman, Robbie Leslie, Tony Moran, Tracy Young and Warren Gluck. Charting a New Course is the theme of the 2006 Winter Party, and several festival events will reflect this theme, with monikers such as Anchors Aweigh DJ Showcase, Love Boat Pool Party and Pirates of the Caribbean. Cultural events include a performance by the hilarious Kate Clinton as well as tickets to the New World Symphony and the Miami Ballet.

Two-thirds of the net proceeds from the Winter Party Festival will be distributed to the Miami-Dade LGBT community through a granting program administered by the Dade Community Foundation. **The remaining one-third of the proceeds will benefit the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. As a result of The Task Force's effort in raising \$200k since taking over management of Winter Party and the Miami Recognition Dinner in 2005, more than \$1.3 million has been granted to LGBT organizations serving the local community.**

Tickets may be purchased online at www.winterparty.com, with festival passes conveniently packaged and economically priced beginning at \$200. There is a \$25 early bird discount for premium passes purchased prior to Jan. 15, 2006 (use discount code EB). As the host hotel, the Doubletree Surfcomber has committed all of its rooms for Winter Party guests, with discounts available. Discounts for airfare on American Airlines and car rental through Avis also are offered on the Web site, where you may also sign up to receive Winter Party Festival updates via e-mail.

PASSPORT

m a g a z i n e

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CELEBRATIONS & EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

February 2006

FLORIDA

MIAMI/SOUTH BEACH

Shrug off the last bits of winter and get a head start on that golden tan by heading to the **Winter Party Festival**. The five-day event spanning March 1-6 includes food/wine, dancing, a fashion show, art exhibitions, a ballet presentation, and comedy performances. The Winter Party Festival explodes on March 5 with a world class dance party known as The Beach Party. The **proceeds garnered by the event benefit the LGBT community, and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.** <http://www.winterparty.com>



LE WINTER PARTY DE SOUTH BEACH

by Yves Lafontaine
January 25, 2006

Endroit de prédilection des grands photographes dans les années 90, point de chute pour des douzaines de groupes ethniques originaires de toute l'Amérique, havre de et secteur unique au monde qui regroupe un des ensembles d'édifices les mieux préservés de style Art déco, le quartier de South Beach est également le centre de la communauté gaie de Miami et un lieu de villégiature très prisé des gais recherchant le soleil et les occasions pour s'éclater.

Même si peu d'endroits où se loger ou manger soient exclusivement gais, toute la région est si populaire auprès de notre clientèle que les lieux de rendez-vous hétéros sont tous accueillants, les voyageurs gais étant en grande partie source de leurs profits. South Beach déborde d'énergie et est très à la mode. Elle attire une foule de voyageurs, incluant des New-yorkais qui s'y rassemblent les week-ends en hiver, des gym queens, des circuit queens, des lesbiennes lipstick et une grande partie du milieu de la mode. La faune des clubs affiche souvent une attitude cinglante et hautaine, et la plage semble animée de personnages tirés des campagnes de 2xist. Malgré que tout cela puisse sembler intimidant pour les «moins avantagés génétiquement parlant», les autres voyageurs adoreront néanmoins l'amalgame, issu du choc des cultures, qu'offre Miami. L'esprit urbain est aussi présent qu'à New York, mais on y est aussi nonchalant que dans les Caraïbes et aussi tendance qu'à Los Angeles, avec un certain savoir-faire européen pour faire bonne mesure. Tout cela, à proximité de plages sablonneuses des plus blanches et d'une mer d'un bleu étincelant, comme nous les représentent les cartes postales depuis des décennies.

Le Winter Party

Après le légendaire White Party, qui a lieu fin novembre ou début décembre, dont les bénéfices sont versés aux personnes vivant avec le VIH/sida, le Winter Party qui se tient au début mars, est l'un des plus importants du circuit-party. Tenu à South Beach depuis 1993, le Winter Party verse ses bénéfices à plusieurs organismes sans but lucratif qui subviennent aux besoins de la communauté GLBT. Cette année, le coup d'envoi sera donné, le 1er mars par une réception de bienvenue organisée à l'hôtel Surfcomber, superbe exemple d'Art Deco. Coté culturel, le choix est vaste, dont Forces of Nature, une soirée mettant en vedette, entre autres, la comédienne Kate Clinton et la chanteuse d'opéra Ada de Luque, un concert du New World Symphony et Artemisia, une soirée artistique des plus éclectiques mettant en vedette les œuvres de différentes artistes lesbiennes des milieux de la musique, de la mode et des beaux-arts. Un extravagant défilé de mode de vêtements de plage toujours très sexy se tiendra également en plein air. Comme c'est la tradition, plusieurs t-dance se dérouleront dans divers endroits, sur le bord des piscines des luxueux hôtels, ainsi que de nombreux cocktails VIP et une ribambelles de partys, tous plus électrisants les uns que les autres et en vive compétition. Les bars les plus branchés de la ville produiront d'ailleurs d'immenses soirées décadentes, avant et après le party officiel qui se déroulera, comme c'est la tradition, le dimanche après-midi sur la superbe plage de South Beach. Les DJ, réfugiés sous d'immenses tentes, opteront pour des rythmes à la fois house, groove, hi-energy et lounge. Les maillots de bain colorés, les paréos et les pagnes (très tendance) seront plus que jamais de saison.

Pour plus d'infos : www.winterparty.com

Plage

La section de la plage la plus populaire pour les gais se situe au niveau de la 12e rue. Vous ne pouvez la rater. Pour ceux qui préfèrent bronzer intégralement, Haulover Beach est l'endroit de prédilection. Cette populaire plage nudiste est située dans le nord de Miami. Empruntez Collins Avenue (A-1-A) au nord de Bal Harbour par le tunnel. La plage accueille autant les baigneurs gais que les hétéros; cependant, la section gaie est située à l'extrémité nord.

Découvrir la ville

Arpenter les rues est une des activités de plein air les plus populaires, mais vous pouvez également louer une bicyclette chez Cycles on the Beach (713 Sth 5th Street; 305-673-2055) ou un scooter chez Scooters on the Beach (1131 5th Street; 305-531-7777).

Art Deco

Le district art déco de Miami Beach est une grande exposition de ce mouvement artistique du début du vingtième siècle et compte des douzaines d'immeubles restaurés de cette architecture caractéristique. Pour vous aider à trouver votre chemin, visitez le centre d'accueil de la Miami Design Preservation League au 1001 Ocean drive (305) 672-2014. Équipez-vous d'une cassette audio de la ligue pour une visite auto guidée du district historique de l'art déco.



FRANK AND 45 LAWMAKERS ASK RICE TO EXPLAIN U.N. DENIAL

Eric Resnick
Feb. 10, 2006

Washington, D.C.--Openly lesbian Rep. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and 44 other Democrats are demanding that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice explain and repudiate a January 23 United Nations vote against two international gay groups.

Their February 7 action followed Reps. Barney Frank of Massachusetts and Tom Lantos of California, who issued separate statements condemning the Bush administration's United Nations vote to deny status to the two groups.

Ohio Reps. Sherrod Brown and Dennis Kucinich are among the signatories to Baldwin's effort, as is Lantos.

"I had hopes for better from you," wrote Frank to Condoleezza Rice on February 2.

"I was deeply troubled to learn that the U.S. government, presumably at your direction, sided with some of the most undemocratic, anti-human rights regimes in the world in voting against consultative status for two international organizations, solely on the grounds that they represent gay and lesbian people," Frank continued.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council's Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations voted January 23 to deny the International Lesbian and Gay Association of Brussels and the Danish National Association for Gays and Lesbians of Denmark consultative status. The vote was 10-5 with three abstentions.

Such status, which is enjoyed by over 3,000 NGOs around the world, allows access to U.N. proceedings, presence at conferences and the right to propose agenda items.

ILGA operates in 90 countries, including the U.S., to reduce discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, and respond to homophobic attacks.

Lantos, a Holocaust survivor and also a Democrat, is also demanding answers from U.N. Ambassador John Bolton.

Lantos, who is the ranking member of the House Committee on International Relations wrote to Bolton January 31, "I sincerely hope that the U.S. vote on this issue was a technical error or the unfortunate result of an undisciplined U.S. officer operating on his or her own without instructions. In any case, I am asking you to clearly and publicly disavow and explain this anti-human rights vote before it does any long-term damage to U.S. moral authority at the U.N. I would also like to discuss with you, at length, any possible breakdown in State Department procedures that may have lead to this most unfortunate U.S.action."

ILGA has sought consultative status since 2002, which the U.S then supported.

The resolution to reject it was put forth by Iran. Joining them and the U.S. in support of it were Cameroon, China, Cuba, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Sudan, and Zimbabwe.

Iran and Zimbabwe are among the most GLBT-oppressive nations in the world.

Voting against the rejection resolution were Chile, France, Germany, Peru, and Romania.

Columbia, Turkey and India abstained. Ivory Coast was not present.

Germany publicly objected to the vote, calling the denial an act of discrimination against NGOs whose sole purpose was to combat discrimination.

"The message the majority of the committee had sent to the NGOs and to the world was clear," said their statement, "discrimination against persons on the grounds of their sexual orientation was okay."

Frank sent a separate letter criticizing Columbia's vote to its president Alvaro Uribe "As a gay man who has been very supportive of your efforts to defeat the anti-democratic forces in Colombia, I was personally as well as officially offended by your government's failure to support the request of two gay and lesbian organizations to receive consultative status at the U.N."

The U.S. issued no statement explaining their vote, but have subsequently said that ILGA was unacceptable due to a long-past association with the North American Man-Boy Love Association.

However, when State Department spokesperson Noel Clay was asked what has changed since 2002, Clay referred the reporter to another spokesperson, Edgar Vasquez, who ignored multiple attempts for comment.

Further, according to the 2002 U.N. minutes, testimony was given that NAMBLA had been expelled from IGLA in 1997, and IGLA abides by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognizes the age of consent around the world to be 18.

The NAMBLA issue was first used to deny ILGA status in 1994, in a move led by then-Senator Jesse Helms.

The reason the Danish group was denied is not known.

IGLA is active in Iran whose president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is waging a pogrom against gay men, including stalking, torture, imprisonment and public hangings.

Consultive status would give IGLA more opportunity to document the plight of Iranian gays for the world.

Outraged, the Persian Lesbian and Gay Organization has sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Condolezza Rice demanding a reversal of the U.S. position. The letter is signed by Arsham Parsi, who is the group's secretary of human rights affairs, Aryan Varjavandi, who is the group's secretary general, and four other officers, all living in exile having fled Iran.

"After the atrocity terrorist attack on the U.S. in September 2001, the Iranian youth were the only youth group in the Middle East to walk with candles and show their support for the U.S. and their solidarity with the U.S. people," says the letter, adding, "Your action in ECOSOC was like a slap in our face and caused a great disappointment indeed."

"We, Iranian GLBT hope that democracies in the world will use U.N. mechanisms and human rights to help oppressed people to gain their rights," it concludes.

GLBT advocacy groups in the U.S. are also demanding an explanation from the State Department.

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force director Matt Foreman issued a statement saying, "Apparently Iran, which President Bush has deemed part of the 'Axis of Evil,' is a suitable partner when it comes to discriminating against gay people."

On January 25, 39 GLBT and human rights organizations led by NGLTF, the Human Rights Campaign, Human Rights Watch and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission released a statement demanding an explanation from Rice.

“This vote was an aggressive assault by the U.S. government on the right of sexual minorities to be heard,” said Scott Long of Human Rights Watch. “It’s astonishing the U.S. would align itself with Sudan, China, Iran and Zimbabwe in a coalition of the homophobic.”

In 2003, a Human Rights and Sexual Orientation Resolution was considered by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights.

That resolution, offered by Brazil, was tabled, in part due to U.S. lack of interest.

FUNDS TO BAN GAY UNIONS 92% IN-STATE

Deborah Bulkeley

Feb. 9, 2006

Utah's campaigns for — and against — amending the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage received 92 percent of their funding from in-state sources.

Despite campaign claims to the contrary, that's one of the highest rates of in-state funding of any of the 13 states in which constitutional amendments were on the ballot in 2004, according to a new report by The Institute on Money in State Politics.

The constitutional amendments passed in every state, some by margins of 3-to-1, according to "The Money Behind the 2004 Marriage Amendments."

Nationally, supporters of the measures raised \$6.8 million, slightly more than the \$6.5 raised by opponents, the report said.

The most costly battleground was in Oregon, where Measure 36 drew nearly \$5.4 million in contributions — 51 percent of that was from out-of-state sources.

"No national groups gave any thoughts to Utah, they would have assumed the amendment was going to pass," said Quin Monson, assistant director of the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy at Brigham Young University.

In many states the pro-amendment campaigns raised more funds than opponents. However, in Utah philanthropist Bruce Bastian enabled the Don't Amend Alliance to get off the ground running early in the season, while amendment supporters lacked organization, said Monson.

"I think the proponents in Utah got a late start, they were badly organized at first, and weren't really doing anything until the very end," Monson said. "The money came in very late on the pro side."

The report's author, Sue O'Connell, said one source of concern in Utah was some \$171,000 pumped into the pro-amendment Utahns For a Better Tomorrow campaign from unknown sources. The money came from Marriage Education Initiatives, a nonprofit corporation that formed the same day it made its first contribution and did not disclose its donors.

Paul Murphy, spokesman for the Attorney General's Office, said a campaign complaint filed against Marriage Education Initiatives is still under investigation.

Monson said there's so far no clear indication that Marriage Education Initiatives broke the state's campaign finance laws.

"I think we have a campaign finance system in Utah that has some gaping loopholes in it that allows people to hide the sources of their donations," he said. "There doesn't seem to be a lot of appetite in the state Legislature to strengthen this type of thing."

O'Connell said Utah isn't the only state where some campaign funding couldn't be tracked. In Ohio, Citizens for Community Values Action gave \$1.18 million of the \$1.19 million raised by the Ohio Campaign to Protect Marriage. That group didn't have to report its contributors because it was a PAC not formed specifically for the ballot campaign, according

to the report.

"I think anytime you can't tell exactly where that money came from, that's of concern," O'Connell said. "The more you know about who's supporting something, or opposing it, the better off you are as a voter."

One of the biggest national funders of amendment supporters was the Arlington Group, comprised of the leaders of various conservative social and religious groups. Contributions from Arlington Group and related organizations totaled nearly \$2 million. However, the group contributed only \$643 in Utah.

National gay and lesbian rights groups also organized against the amendments, however, their efforts appeared less organized.

The Human Rights Campaign pumped \$1.1 million into five states, including \$50,000 in Utah. **The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force gave nearly \$790,000 in six states, including \$10,000 in Utah.**

In Utah, amendment opponents the Don't Amend Alliance and Utah Lawyers for Sound Constitutional Amendments raised 88 percent of the \$780,740 in-state.

The campaigns supporting the amendment raised 98 percent of their campaign funds, including those from Marriage Education Initiatives, in-state according to the report.

Sen. Chris Butters, R-West Jordan, and Rep. LaVar Christensen, R-Sandy also gave to the campaigns. Monson said it's fairly common for candidates to issue loans to their own campaigns, but it's less common for ballot initiatives. The Constitutional Defense of Marriage Alliance repaid a \$15,000 loan to Christensen, and \$19,537 to Butters last year.

Monson said that Amendment 3 passed wasn't much of a surprise, nor was the money poured in by opponents despite consistent polling that showed support for the measure.

The debate, he said, involved "true believers" who aren't going to cut and run.

"When you get an issue that involves fundamental ideological beliefs, you're willing to do things that don't make sense otherwise," Monson said. "You're willing to spend money when you know you're going to lose."

MINNEAPOLIS  ST. PAUL

THE MINNESOTA DAILY

You're invited to fight a marriage ban

By Emma Carew

Feb. 10, 2006

Jen Mohnkern and Mike Grewe have been planning for months. They've chosen decorations, ordered food and sent more than 250 fancy white wedding invitations.

But Mohnkern and Grewe aren't getting married.

As co-chairs of the Queer Student Cultural Center, they are helping to plan Sunday's Freedom to Marry celebration.

The event will give students and community members a chance to celebrate, dance and eat wedding cake while making connections and finding ways to get involved in the fight against a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, Mohnkern said.

National Freedom to Marry Day is not only a day for action, but also a day for celebration, said Owen Marciano, assistant director of the Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender Programs office.

"It's a day for GLBT people to celebrate their relationships as good and healthy relationships and it also has an activist side to it," he said. "Although the GLBT community has come a long way, we still have a long way to go."

University Queer Men, Queer Women, Co-Rise and the Queer Graduate and Professional Association are hosting a wedding reception-themed event Sunday in Coffman Union Great Hall, Grewe said.

"We're basically protesting an amendment that would ban gay marriage in Minnesota," he said. "We feel that is writing discrimination into the constitution."

The day is going to be of political importance, Grewe said, because a constitutional amendment that would limit marriage to one man and one woman is likely to be on the ballot in November.

"It's very important to highlight the issue now, and be on the offensive," he said.

GLBT and GLBT-allied organizations from around the Twin Cities, such as OutFront Minnesota, Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays — Twin Cities and The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation have committed to having a table at the event, Grewe said.

GLAAD approached the QSCC when it first learned of the event, he said, and offered to give a media training session.

"This is also about family values," Grewe said. "We don't believe hate is a family value. We don't think fear or ignorance is a family value."

Mohnkern said this is the first year the event will be this large.

"We wanted to have an event that would draw the campus, the community and organizations together and get everybody talking," Mohnkern said. "The idea behind it is, I'm not coming to your revolution if I can't dance. Not everyone wants to be an activist, but everyone wants to have a good time."

“It is not even specifically about GLBT people having the right to marry,” Mohnkern said. “It’s about no one deserves to have outright discrimination against them in a constitution. There is no family in Minnesota that deserves that.”

Keynote speakers for the event include Beth Zemsky, adjunct faculty in the GLBT studies department and former co-chair of the Board of Directors for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and Monica Meyer from OutFront Minnesota.

Meyer will discuss the logistics of the possibility of the constitutional amendment; where it’s been in the past, where it’s coming from and how that’s all changed, Mohnkern said.

Zemsky will be discussing the current situation for GLBT partners in Minnesota and comparing it with situations in other states that have faced constitutional amendments.

A legislative statute exists to ban same-sex marriage, she said.

State and municipal employees are not offered domestic partner benefits, but more than 200 corporations and nonprofit organizations in Minnesota do offer them, Zemsky said.

In other states where constitutional amendments have gone to the ballot, there has been a lot of light shed on the GLBT community, often negative, she said.

Hate crime rates in those areas also have increased, Zemsky said.

But the GLBT community is becoming active earlier, Mohnkern said.

“We know what our plan of action is for multiple outcomes,” Mohnkern said.

Mohnkern has been surprised throughout the year by the number of allied students appearing at QSCC-sponsored events, such as National Coming Out Week and World AIDS Day, Mohnkern said.

“The amount of allies we have on campus is astounding,” Mohnkern said. “I think we need to respect and acknowledge that.”

Marciano said this is an especially important fight for allies to join.

“The GLBT community needs as many allies and supporters as possible to win this fight,” he said.

QSCC Special Events Coordinator Tim Connolly said he thinks this event is important “to get awareness out to people, whether you’re GLBTQ-identified or not.”

He also said the event will get more exposure for the GLBT community.

“I think there are still people out there who are like, ‘I don’t know people who are gay,’ ” he said. “I think the more that we’re out there, the more maybe people will understand that we’re just like them.”



Anti-gay marriage petition won't make Fla. ballot

Feb. 10, 2006

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Supporters of an anti-gay marriage amendment in Florida have failed to gather the required number of signatures to qualify the measure for the 2006 election ballot. But the battle is not over, as supporters of the amendment are now setting their sights on 2008. As of the Feb. 1 deadline for submitting signatures to the state elections office, the group Florida4Marriage.org had submitted 456,363 signatures to the state elections office. The group needed 611,009 to qualify the marriage amendment for the 2006 ballot. **Dave Fleischer of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force said the petition drive's failure "suggests a weakness" on the part of anti-gay marriage forces in Florida.** But he cautioned that it's a "near certainty" that the amendment will be on the 2008 election ballot.



GAY CATHOLICS GIVE POPE FAILING GRADE ON LOVE DOCUMENT

Jan. 25, 2006

NEW YORK CITY —Pope Benedict XVI released his first encyclical on Wednesday, a letter of instruction on the nature of human and divine love.

Titled "Deus Caritas Est" (God is Love) it begins with a statement in support of erotic love and reiterates the pope's belief that the only valid form of sexual expression comes in the form of monogamous marriage between a man and a woman.

The pope then moves from reflection on personal love to the church's responsibility of global charity.

Vatican observers are closely examining the teaching for signs about the direction the new pope's rule will take, but already gays and lesbians in the church are dismissing it.

"When considering Pope Benedict's discussion of the different dimensions of the concept of love, it is striking that in so many ways the Catholic Church fails to love lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, said Debbie Weill, executive director of Dignity.

"His letter describes in considerable detail several facets of God's love, which the Church intentionally chooses not to extend to LGBT persons, in direct contrast to the idea that 'Deus Caritas Est:' God is Love".

Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry and a member of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Religious Leadership Roundtable, said that despite the poetic beauty of the pope's reflection on love, "Under Benedict's leadership, the Vatican has framed homosexuality as a malformed psychological trait or a deviant form of sexual behavior, and has downplayed the understanding of many theologians, priests, bishops, and lay people that same-sex relationships are a validly Catholic and human way that people experience the love of God."

DeBernardo cited the Vatican's recent ban on openly gay seminarians and the church's interference in the political issue of civil marriage for same-sex couples as being out of sync with the encyclical's call for charity and justice.

"Catholic leaders have worked aggressively to keep same-sex couples from obtaining the freedom to marry and against laws that would protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from discrimination. These types of political activities are contrary to the Catholic tradition of equal justice and the inherent dignity of every human person," DeBernardo said.

The encyclical distinguishes among different meanings of love, including patriotism, friendship, familial love, and love of God, but then makes the statement that "one (definition of love) in particular stands out: love between man and woman, where body and soul are inseparably joined..."

"According to whom?" asks Mary Hunt, co-director of the Women's Alliance for Theology Ethics and Ritual, and another member of the Roundtable.

"The argument is without any reference to anthropology or social science that would make clear that love which joins the body and soul comes in many forms — monogamous heterosexual marriage is only one of them. The leap of faith and leap of logic on Benedict's part is based on a hierarchical view of the world which says that just because the pope says it, it must be so. Many Catholics will not agree."

In the 71-page document Benedict also stressed that the state alone is responsible for creating a just society, not the

church. But he said the church has the right and the duty to be involved in politics by helping "form consciences in political life and stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly, even when this might involve conflict with situations of personal interest."

The Church has been one of the leading forces among opponents of legislation to grant civil rights to gay and lesbian couples.